

The

IRON RATION

GEORGEABEL SCHRENER

LIBRARY

University of California

IRVINE

50

H. McPherson

May 11
1908



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
IRVINE

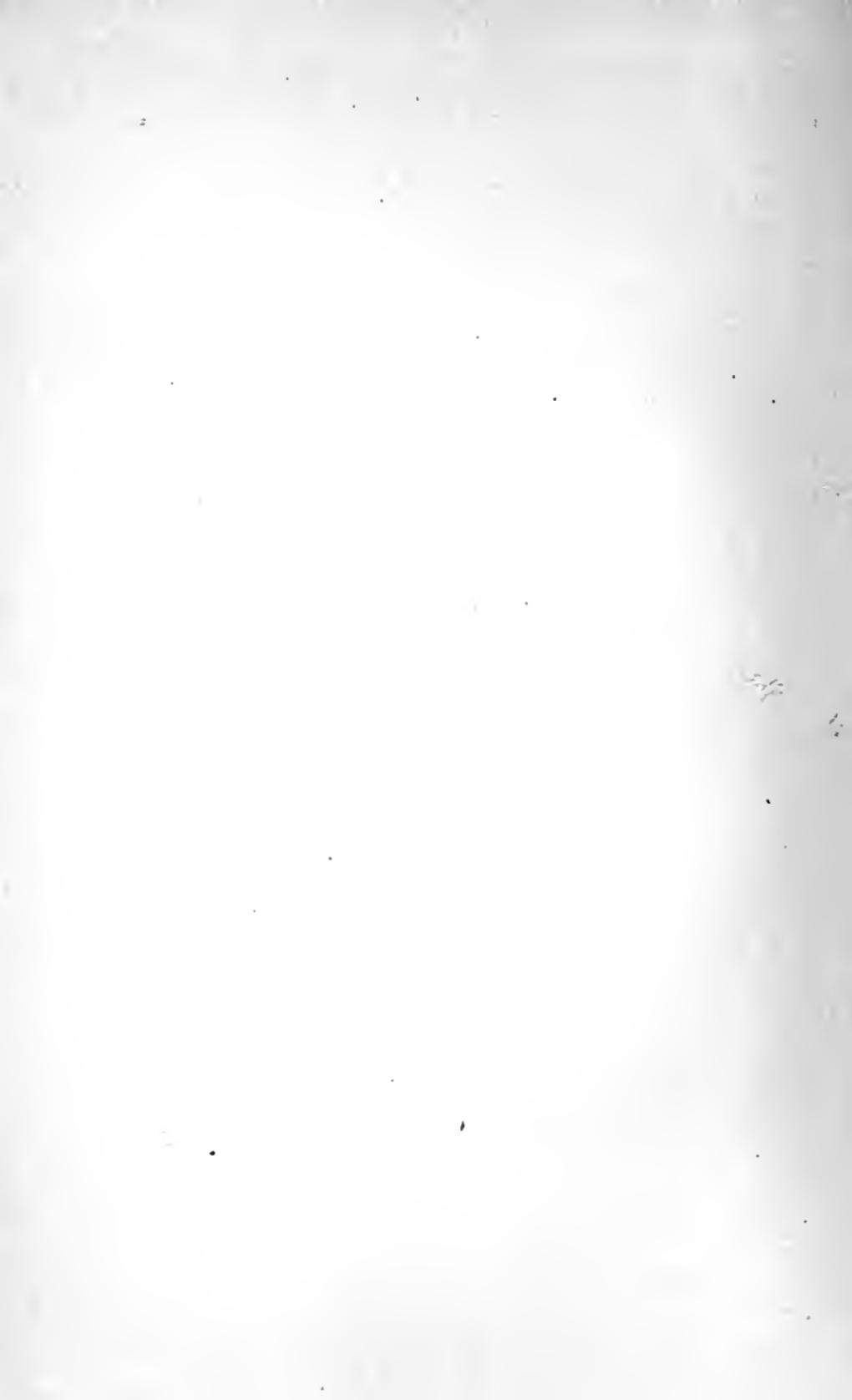
Gift of

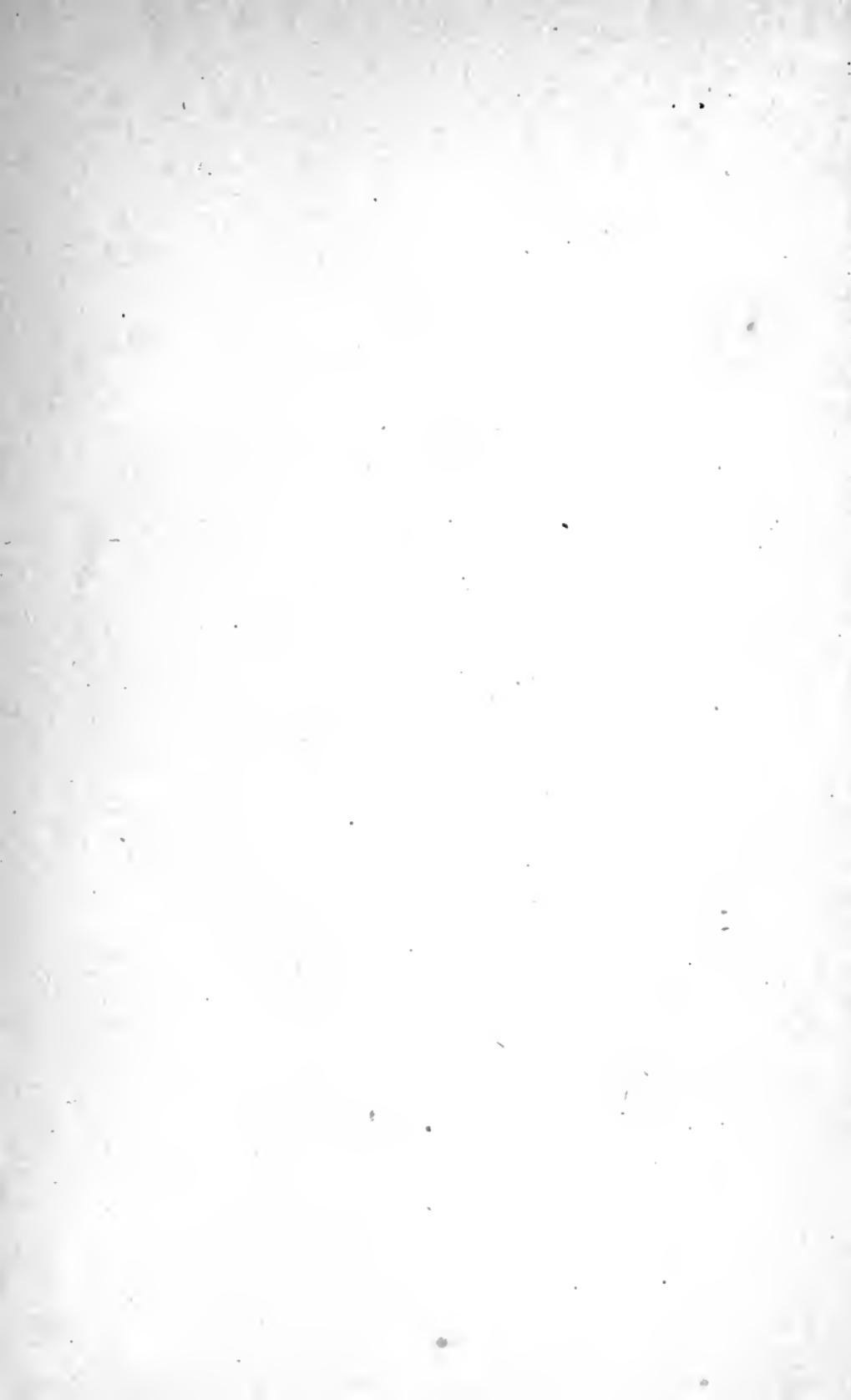
THE HONNOLD LIBRARY

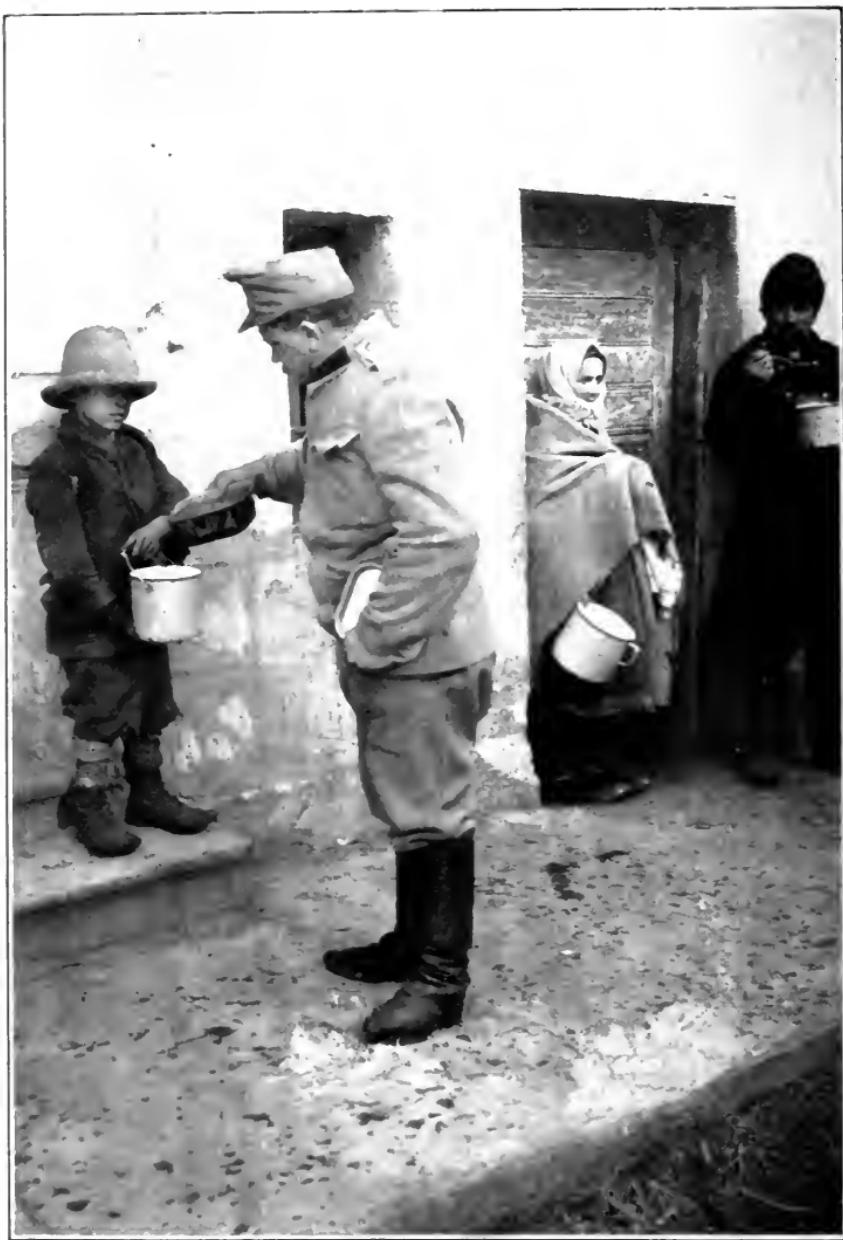
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE IRON RATION

6







Photograph from Henry Ruschin

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER IN CARPATHIANS GIVING HUNGRY YOUNGSTER SOMETHING TO EAT

Moved by the misery of the civilian population the soldiers will often share their rations with them. An Austrian soldier in this case shares his food with a boy in a small town in the Carpathian Mountains, Hungary.

THE IRON RATION

*Three Years in
Warring Central Europe*

BY
GEORGE ABEL SCHREINER

ILLUSTRATED



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

HD
9013.6
S4

THE IRON RATION

Copyright, 1918, by Harper & Brothers
Printed in the United States of America
Published February, 1918

B-8

TO MY FRIEND
DR. JEROME STONBOROUGH
MAN—SCHOLAR—PHILANTHROPIST

ILLUSTRATIONS

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER IN CARPATHIANS GIVING HUNGRY YOUNGSTER SOMETHING TO EAT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
PROVING-GROUND OF THE KRUPP WORKS AT ESSEN	<i>Facing p.</i> 30
A LEVY OF FARMER BOYS OFF FOR THE BARRACKS	" 66
GERMAN CAVALRYMEN AT WORK PLOWING .	" 66
STREET SCENE AT EISENBACH, SOUTHERN GERMANY	" 96
CASTLE HOHENZOLLERN	" 188
TRAVELING-KITCHEN IN BERLIN	" 260
STREET TRAM AS FREIGHT CARRIER	" 260
WOMEN CARRYING BRICKS AT BUDAPEST . . .	" 296
VILLAGE SCENE IN HUNGARY	" 296
SCENE IN GERMAN SHIP-BUILDING YARD . .	" 378

PREFACE

"THE IRON RATION" is the name for the food the soldier carries in his "pack" when in the field. It may be eaten only when the commanding officer deems this necessary and wise. When the iron ration is released, no command that the soldier should eat is necessary. He is hungry then—famished. Usually by that time he has been on half, third, and quarter ration. The iron ration is the last food in sight. There may be more to-morrow. But that is not the motive of the commander for releasing the food. What he has to deal with is the fact that his men are on the verge of exhaustion.

The population of the states known as the Central Powers group of belligerents being in a position similar to that of the soldiers consuming their iron ration, I have chosen the designation of this emergency meal as title for a book that deals with life in Central Europe as influenced by the war.

That life has been paid little attention by writers. The military operations, on the one hand, and the scarcity of food, on the other, have been the cynosures. How and to what extent these were related, and in what manner

P R E F A C E

they were borne by the public, is not understood. Seen from afar, war and hunger and all that relates to them, form so bewildering a mosaic in somber colors that only a very general impression is gained of them.

I have pictured here the war time life of Central Europe's social and political aggregates. Of that life the struggle for bread was the major aspect. The words of the Lord's Prayer—"Give us our daily bread"—came soon to have a great meaning to the people of Central Europe. That cry was addressed to the government, however. Food regulation came as the result of it. What that regulation was is being shown here.

It will be noticed that I have given food questions a great deal of close attention. The war-time life of Central Europe could not be portrayed in any other manner. All effort and thought was directed toward the winning of the scantiest fare. Men and women no longer strove for the pleasures of life, but for the absolute essentials of living. During the day all labored and scrambled for food, and at night men and women schemed and plotted how to make the fearful struggle easier.

To win even a loaf of bread became difficult. It was not alone a question of meeting the simplest wants of living by the hardest of labor; the voracity of the tax collector and the rapacity of the war profiteer came to know no bounds. Morsels had to be snatched out of the mouth of the poor to get revenue for the war and the pound of flesh for the Shylocks.

P R E F A C E

So intense was that struggle for bread that men and women began to look upon all else in life as wholly secondary. A laxness in sex matters ensued. The mobilizations and the loss of life incident to the war aggravated this laxity.

But these are things set out in the book. Here I will say that war is highly detrimental to all classes of men and women. When human society is driven to realize that nothing in life counts when there is no food, intellectual progress ceases. When bread becomes indeed the irreducible minimum, the mask falls and we see the human being in all its nakedness.

Were I presumptuous enough to say so, I might affirm that this book contains the truth, nothing but the truth, and the whole truth about Germany and Central Europe. I have the necessary background for so bold a statement. I know the German language almost perfectly. German literature, tradition and thought, and I are no strangers. Three years of contact as newspaper-man with all that is German and Central European provided all the opportunities for observation and study one could wish for. And the flare of the Great War was illuminating my field, bringing into bold relief the bad, which had been made worse, and the good, which had been made better.

But there is no human mind that can truthfully and unerringly encompass every feature and phase of so calamitous a thing as the part taken in the European War by the Central Powers group of belligerents. I at least cannot

P R E F A C E

picture to myself such a mind. Much less could I claim that I possessed it.

What I have written here is an attempt to mirror truthfully the conditions and circumstances which raised throughout Central Europe, a year after the war had begun, the cry in city, town, village, and hamlet, "Give us bread!"

During the first two months of the European War I was stationed at The Hague for the Associated Press of America. I was then ordered to Berlin, and later was given *carte blanche* in Austria-Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. When military operations, aside from the great fronts in Central Europe, had lost much of the public's interest, I returned to Germany and Austria-Hungary, giving thereafter the Balkans and Turkey such attention as occasional trips made possible. In the course of three years I saw *every* front, and had the most generous opportunities to become familiar with the subject treated in this book—life in Central Europe as it was amidst war and famine.

You will meet here most of the personages active in the guiding of Central Europe's destiny—monarchs, statesmen, army leaders, and those in humbler spheres. You will also meet the lowly. Beside the rapacious beasts of prey stand those upon whom they fed. Prussianism is encountered as I found it. I believe the Prussianism I picture is the real Prussianism.

The ways of the autocrat stand in no favor with me, and, being somewhat addicted to consistency, I have borne this in mind while writing.

P R E F A C E

The author can be as autocratic as the ruler. His despotism has the form of stuffing down others' throats his opinions. Usually he thinks himself quite as infallible as those whose acts he may have come to criticize. But since the doctrine of infallibility is the mainstay of all that is bad and despotic in thought as well as in government, we can well afford to give it a wide berth. If the German people had thought their governments—there are many governments in Germany—less infallible they would not have tolerated the absolutism of the Prussian Junker. To that extent responsibility for the European War must rest on the shoulders of the people—a good people, earnest, law-abiding, thrifty, unassuming, industrious, painstaking, temperate, and charitable.

Some years ago there was a struggle between republicanism and monarchism on the South African veldt. I was a participant in that—on the republican side. I grant that our government was not as good as it might have been. I grant that our republic was in reality a paternal oligarchy. Yet there was the principle of the thing. The Boers preferred being *burghers*—citizens—to being subjects. The word *subject* implies government ownership of the individual. The word *citizen* means that, within the range of the prudently possible, the individual is co-ordinate instead of subordinated. That may seem a small cause to some for the loss of 11,000 men and 23,000 women and children, which the Boers sustained in defense of that principle.

P R E F A C E

And yet that same cause led to the American Revolution. For that same cause stood Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. For that same cause stands every good American to-day—my humble self included.

S.

NEW YORK, *January, 1918.*

THE IRON RATION



THE IRON RATION

I

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

PRESS and government in the Entente countries were sure that Germany and Austria-Hungary could be reduced by hunger in some six months after the outbreak of the European War. The newspapers and authorities of the Central Powers made sport of this contention at first, but sobered up considerably when the flood of contraband "orders in privy council" began to spill in London. At first conditional contraband became contraband. Soon non-contraband became conditional contraband, and not long after that the British government set its face even against the import into Germany of American apples. That was the last straw, as some thought. The end of contraband measures was not yet, however. It was not long before the neutrals of Europe, having physical contact with the Central Powers, were to find out that they could not export food to Germany without having to account for it.

THE IRON RATION

Small wonder then that already in September of 1914 it was asserted that the elephants of the Berlin Zoo had been butchered for their meat. I was then stationed at The Hague, as correspondent for an American telegraphic news service, and had a great deal to do with the "reports" of the day. It was my business to keep the American public as reliably informed as conditions permitted.

I did not publish anything about the alleged butchering of elephants and other denizens of the Berlin zoological establishments, knowing full well that these stories were absurd. And, then, I was not in the necessary frame of mind to look upon elephant steak as others did. Most people harbor a sort of prejudice against those who depart from what is considered a "regular" bill of fare. We sniff at those whom we suspect of being hippophagians, despite the fact that our hairier ancestors made sitting down to a fine horse roast an important feature of their religious ceremonies. I can't do that any longer since circumstances compelled me once to partake of mule. Nor was it good mule. Lest some be shocked at this seeming perversity, I will add that this happened during the late Anglo-Boer War.

The statement, especially as amended, should serve as an assurance that I am really qualified to write on food in war-time, and no Shavianism is intended, either.

Food conditions in Germany interested me intensely. Hunger was expected to do a great

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

deal of fighting for the Allies. I was not so sure that this conclusion was correct. Germany had open-eyedly taken a chance with the British blockade. That left room for the belief that somebody in Germany had well considered this thing.

But the first German food I saw had a peculiar fascination for me, for all that. Under the glass covers standing on the buffet of a little restaurant at Vaalsplatz I espied sandwiches. Were they real sandwiches, or "property" staged for my special benefit? It was generally believed in those days that the Germans had brought to their border towns all the food they had in the empire's interior, so that the Entente agents would be fooled into believing that there was plenty of food on hand.

Vaalsplatz is the other half of Vaals. The two half towns make up one whole town, which really is not a whole town, because the Dutch-German border runs between the two half towns. But the twin communities are very neighborly. I suspected as much. For that reason the presence of the sandwiches in Vaalsplatz meant nothing. What assurance had I that, when they saw me coming, the sandwiches were not rushed across the border and into Germany, so that I might find the fleshpots of Egypt where the gaunt specter of famine was said to have its lair?

This is the manner in which the press agents of starvation used to work in those days. And the dear, gullible public, never asking itself

THE IRON RATION

once whether it was possible to reduce almost overnight to starvation two states that were not far from being economically self-contained, swallowed it all—bait, hook, line, and sinker.

My *modus operandi* differed a little from this. I bought three of the sandwiches for ten pfennige—two and a quarter cents American—apiece, and found them toothsome morsels, indeed. The discovery was made, also, that German beer was still as good as it always had been.

My business on that day took me no farther into Germany than the cemetery that lies half-way between Vaalsplatz and Aix-la-Chapelle. There I caught on the wing, as it were, the man I was looking for, and then smuggled him out of the country as my secretary.

I had seen no other food but the sandwiches, and as I jumped from the speeding trolley-car I noticed that they were digging a grave in the cemetery. Ah! Haven of refuge for a famine victim!

I said something of that sort to the man I was smuggling into Holland. Roger L. Lewis looked at me with contempt and pity in his eyes, as the novelist would say.

"Are you crazy?" he asked. "Why, the Germans have more food than is good for them. They are a nation of gluttons, in fact."

With Mr. Lewis going to London I could not very well write of the sandwiches and the grave in the cemetery. These things were undeniable facts. I had seen them. But the trouble was that they were not related to each other and had

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

with life only those connections they normally have. The famine-booster does not look at things in that light, though.

Four weeks later I was in Berlin. The service had sent me there to get at the bottom of the famine yarns. There seemed to be something wrong with starvation. It was not progressing rapidly enough, and I was to see to what extent the Entente economists were right.

In a large restaurant on the Leipzigerstrasse in Berlin I found a very interesting bill of fare and a placard speaking of food. The menu was generous enough. It offered the usual assortment of *hors-d'œuvre*, soup, fish, *entrée*, *relevée*, roasts, cold meats, salads, vegetables, and sweetmeats.

On the table stood a basket filled with dinner rolls. The man was waiting for my order.

But to give an order seemed not so simple. I was trying to reconcile the munificence of the dishes list with the legend on the placard. That legend said—heavy black letters on white cardboard, framed by broad lines of scarlet red:

SAVE THE FOOD!

The esteemed patrons of this establishment are requested not to eat unnecessarily. Do not eat two dishes if one is enough!

THE MANAGEMENT.

It was my first day in Berlin, and having that very morning, at Bentheim, on the Dutch-

THE IRON RATION

German border, run into a fine piece of German thoroughness and regard for the law, I was at a loss what to do under the circumstances. While I knew that the management of the restaurant could not have me arrested if I picked more than two dishes, I had also ascertained that the elephant steak was a fable, I was not so sure that ordering a "regular" dinner might not give offense. That is the sort of feeling you have on the first day in a country at war. I had seen so many war proclamations of the government, all in heavy black and red on white, that the restaurant placard really meant more to me than was necessary.

I asked the waiter to come to my assistance. Being a native of the country, he would know, no doubt, how far I could go.

"You needn't pay any attention to that sign, sir!" he said. "Nobody does any more. You can order anything you like—as many dishes as you please."

I wanted to know whether the placard was due to a government regulation.

"Not directly, sir. The government has advised hotels and restaurants to economize in food. The management here wanted to do its share, of course, and had these signs printed. At first our patrons minded them. But now everybody is falling back into the old eating habits, and the management wants to make all the money it can, of course."

The war was then about two months old.

What the waiter said was enough for me. I

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

ordered accordingly and during dinner had much of the company of the serving-man. It seemed that to a great deal of natural shrewdness he had added, in the course of much traveling, a fair general education. When I left the restaurant I was richer by a good picture of food conditions in Berlin, as these had been influenced up to that moment by the intentions of the Prussian government.

So far the authorities had done very little to "regulate" food questions, though problems were already in sight and had to be dealt with by the poor of the city. That economy had to be practised was certain even then. The government had counseled economy in consumption, and various patriotic societies and institutions of learning had given advice. But actual interference in public subsistence matters had so far not taken place.

The German government had tried to meet the English "business-as-usual" with a policy of "eating-as-usual." It was felt that cutting down on food might put a damper on the war spirit. To be enthusiastic when hungry may be possible for the superman. It is hard work for the come-and-go kind of citizen.

Nor had anybody found cause to abandon the notion that the European War would not last long. True enough, the western front had been congealed by Marshal Joffre, but there was then no reason to believe that it would not again be brought into flux, in which case it was hoped that the German general staff would give

THE IRON RATION

to the world a fine picture of swift and telling offensive in open-field operations. After that the war was to be over.

Of the six months which the war was to last, according to plans that existed in the mouths of the gossips, two were past now, and still the end was not in sight. An uncomfortable feeling came upon many when seclusion undraped reality. That much I learned during my first week at the German capital.

I must mention here that I speak German almost perfectly. Armed in this manner, I invaded markets and stores, ate to-day in the super-refined halls of the Adlon and shared to-morrow a table with some hackman, and succeeded also in gaining *entrée* into some families, rich, not-so-rich, and poor.

In the course of three weeks I had established to my own satisfaction, and that of the service, that while as yet there could be no question of food shortage in Germany, there would soon come a time when waists—which were not thin then by any means—would shrink. The tendency of food prices was upward, and, as they rose, more people increased the consumption of food staples, especially bread. Since these staples were the marrow of the country's economic organism, something would have to be done soon to limit their consumption to the absolutely necessary.

The first step in that direction was soon to be taken. War-bread—*Kriegsbrot*—made its appearance. It was more of a staff of life than

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

had been believed, despite its name. To roughly 55 per cent. of rye was added 25 per cent. of wheat and 20 per cent. of potato meal, sugar, and shortening. The bread was very palatable, and the potato elements in it prevented its getting stale rapidly. It tasted best on the third day, and on trips to the front I have kept the bread as long as a week without noticing deterioration.

But the German had lived well in the past and it was not easy to break him of the habits he had cultivated under a superabundance of food. The thing had gone so far that when somebody wanted to clean an expensive wall-paper the baker would be required to deliver a dozen hot loaves of wheat bread, which, cut into halves lengthwise, would then be rubbed over the wall-paper—with excellent results as regards the appearance of the room and the swill-barrel from which the pigs were fed.

On this subject I had a conversation with a woman of the upper class. She admitted that she herself had done it. The paper was of the best sort and so pleasing to her eyes that she could not bear having it removed when discolored from exposure to light and dust.

"It was sinful, of course," she said. "I believe the Good Book says that bread should not be wasted, or something to that effect. Well, we had grown careless. I am ashamed when I think of it. My mother would have never permitted that. But everybody was doing it. It seems now that we are about to pay for our

THE IRON RATION

transgressions. All Germany was fallen upon the evil ways that come from too much prosperity. From a thrifty people we had grown to be a luxury-loving one. The war will do us good in that respect. It will show us that the simple life is to be preferred to the kind we have been leading for some twenty years now."

Then the countess resumed her knitting, and spoke of the fact that she had at the front six sons, one son-in-law, and four automobiles.

"But what troubles me most is that my estates have been deprived of so many of their laborers and horses that I may not be able to attend properly to the raising of crops," she continued. "My superintendents write me that they are from two to three weeks behind in plowing and seeding. The weather isn't favorable, either. What is going to happen to us in food matters, if this war *should* last a year? Do you think it *will* last a year?"

I did not know, of course.

"You ought to know the English very well," said the countess. "Do you think they really mean to starve us out?"

"They will if the military situation demands this, madame," I replied. "Your people will make a mistake if they overlook the tenacity of that race. I am speaking from actual experience on the South African plains. You need expect no let-up from the English. They may blunder a great deal, but they always have the will and the resources to make good their mistakes and profit by them, even if they cannot learn rapidly."

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

The countess had thought as much.

I gained a good insight into German food production a few days later, while I was the guest of the countess on an estate not far from Berlin.

The fields there were being put to the best possible use under intensive farming, though their soil had been deprived of its natural store of plant nutriment centuries ago.

I suppose the estate was poor "farmland" already when the first crops were being raised in New England. But intelligent cultivation, and, above all, rational fertilizing methods, had always kept it in a fine state of production. The very maximum in crops was being obtained almost every year. Trained agriculturists superintended the work, and, while machinery was being employed, none of it was used in departments where it would have been the cause of a loss in production—something against which the ease-loving farmer is not always proof.

The idea was to raise on the area all that could be raised, even if the net profit from a less thorough method of cultivation would have been just as big. Inquiry showed that the agrarian policy of the German government favored this course. The high protective tariff, under which the German food-producer operated, left a comfortable profit margin no matter how good the crops of the competitor might be. Since Germany imported a small quantity of food even in years when bumper crops came, large harvests did not cause a depression in prices;

THE IRON RATION

they merely kept foreign foodstuffs out of the country and thereby increased the trade balance in favor of Germany.

Visiting some small farms and villages in the neighborhood of the estate, I found that the example set by the scientifically managed *Gut* of the countess was being followed everywhere. The agrarian policy of the government had wiped out all competition between large and small producers, and so well did the village farmers and the estate-managers get along that the *Gut* was in reality a sort of agricultural experiment station and school farm for those who had not studied agriculture at the seats of learning which the bespectacled superintendents of the countess had attended.

I began to understand why Germany was able to virtually grow on an area less than that of the State of Texas the food for nearly seventy million people, and then leave to forestry and waste lands a quarter of that area. There was also the explanation why Germany was able to export small quantities of rye and barley, in exchange for the wheat she could not raise herself profitably. The climate of northern Germany is not well suited for the growing of wheat. If it were, Germany would not import any wheat, seeing that the area now given to the cultivation of sugar-beets and potatoes could be cut down much without affecting home consumption. As it is, the country exported before the war almost a third of her sugar production, and much of the alcohol won from potatoes entered the

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

foreign market either in its raw state or in the form of manufactured products.

But the war had put a crimp into this fine scheme. Not only was the estate short-handed and short of animal power, but in the villages it was no better. Some six million men had then been mobilized, and of this number 28 per cent. came directly from the farms, and another 14 per cent. had formerly been engaged in food production and distribution also. To fill the large orders of hay, oats, and straw for the army, the cattle had to be kept on the meadows—pastures in the American sense of the word are but rarely found in overcrowded Europe—and that would lead to a shortage in stable manure, the most important factor in soil-fertilizing.

The outlook was gloomy enough and quite a contrast to the easy war spirit which still swayed the city population.

Interviews with a goodly number of German government officials and men connected with the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture confirmed the impressions I had gained in the course of my food investigation. For the time being, there was enough of everything. But that was only for the time being.

Public subsistence depends in a large measure on the products of animal industry. There is the dairy, for instance. While cows can live on grass, they will not give much or good milk if hay and grass are not supplemented by fat-making foods. Of such feed Germany does not produce enough, owing to climatic conditions.

THE IRON RATION

Indian corn will not ripen in northern Europe, and cotton is out of the question altogether. In the past, Indian corn had been imported from Hungary, Roumania, and the United States mostly, and cotton-seed products had been brought in from the United States also. Roumania still continued to sell Indian corn during the first months of the war, but Great Britain had put cotton-seed cake and the like under the ban of contraband. If the bread-basket was not as yet hung high, the crib certainly began to get very much out of reach.

One day, then, I found that every advertisement "pillar" in the streets of Berlin called loudly for two things—the taking of an animal census throughout Prussia, and the advice that as many pigs as possible should be killed. Poor porkers! It was to be wide-open season for them soon.

Gently, ever so gently, the Prussian and other German state governments were beginning to put the screws on the farming industry—the thing they had nursed so well. No doubt the thing hurt. But there was no help. Animal feed was discovered to be short. The authorities interfered with the current of supply and demand for the first time. Feed Commissions and Fodder Centrals were established, and after that the farmer had to show cause why he should get the amount of feed he asked for. The innovation recoiled on the lowliest first—among them the pigs.

Into them and upon them had been heaped

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

a great deal of fat by purposeful feeding with an ulterior motive. The porkers stood well in the glory for which they are intended. But the lack of fattening feed would soon cause them to live more or less on their own stores of fat. That had to be prevented, naturally. By many, a butchered two-hundred-pound porker is thought to be better than a live razorback. The knife began its deadly work—the slaughter of the porcine innocents was on.

To the many strange cults and castes that exist we must add the German village butcher. He is busy only when the pork “crop” comes in, but somehow he seems to defy the law that only continued practice makes perfect. He works from November to February of each year, but when the next season comes he is as good as before, seemingly.

But in 1914 the village butcher was busy at the front. Thus it came that men less expert were in charge of the conservation of pork products. The result could have been foreseen, but it was not. The farmers, eager not to lose an ounce of fat, and not especially keen to feed their home-raised grain to the animals, had their pigs butchered. That was well enough, in a way. But the tons of sausages that were made, and the thousands of tons of pickled and smoked hams, shoulders, sides-of-bacon, and what not, had been improperly cured in many cases, and vast quantities of them began to spoil.

It was now a case of having no pigs and also no pork.

THE IRON RATION

The case deserves special attention for the reason that it is the first crevasse that appeared in the levee that was to hold back the high-flood of inflated prices and food shortage.

The affair of the porkers did not leave the German farmers in the best frame of mind. They had needlessly sacrificed a goodly share of their annual income. The price of pork fell to a lower level than had been known in twenty years, and meanwhile the farmer was beginning to buy what he needed in a market that showed sharp upward curves. To this was being added the burden of war taxation.

But even that was not all. Coming in close contact with the Berlin authorities, I had been able to judge the quality of their efforts for the saving of food. I had learned, for instance, that the Prussian and other state governments never intended to order the killing of the pigs. The most that was done by them was to advise the farmers and villagers to kill off all animals that had reached their maximum weight and whose keep under the reduced ration system would not pay.

Zealous officials in the provinces gave that thing a different aspect. Eager to obey the slightest suggestion of those above, these men interpreted the advice given as an order and disseminated it as such. The farmer with sense enough to question this was generally told that what he would not do on advice he would later be ordered to do.

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

I was able to ascertain in connection with this subject that all which is bad in German, and especially in Prussian, government has rarely its inception in the higher places. It is the *Amtsstube*—government bureau—that breeds the qualities for which government in the German Empire is deservedly odious. At any ministry I would get the very best treatment—far better, for instance, than I should hope to get at any seat of department at Washington—but it was different when I had to deal with some official underling.

This class, as a rule, enters the government service after having been professional non-commissioned officers for many years. By that time the man has become so thoroughly a drill sergeant that his usefulness in other spheres of life should be considered as ended. Instead of that, the German government makes him an official. The effect produced is not a happy one.

It was a member of this tribe who once told me that I was not to think. I confess that I did not know whether to laugh or cry when I heard that.

The case has some bearing on the subject discussed here, and for that reason I will refer to it briefly.

At the American embassy at Berlin they had put my passport into proper shape, as they thought. A Mr. Harvey was positive that such was the case. But at the border it was found that somebody was mistaken. The Tenth Army, in whose bailiwick I found myself, had changed

THE IRON RATION

the passport regulations, and the American embassy at Berlin seemed not to have heard of the change.

A very snappy sergeant of the border survey service wanted to know how I had dared to travel with an imperfectly viséed passport. There was nothing else to say but that I thought the passport was in order.

“*Sie haben kein Recht zu denken*” (“You have no right to think”), snarled the man.

That remark stunned me. Here was a human being audacious enough to deny another human being the right to think. What next?

The result of some suitable remarks of mine were that presently I was under arrest and off for an interview with the *Landrat*—the county president at Bentheim.

The *Landrat* was away, however—hunting, as I remember it. In his stead I found a so-called assessor. I can say for the man that he was the most offensive government official or employee I have ever met. He had not said ten words when that was plain to me.

“Ah! You *thought* the passport was in order,” he mocked. “You *thought* so! Don’t you know that it is dangerous to *think*? ”

There and then my patience took leave of me. I made a few remarks that left no doubt in the mind of the official that I reserved for myself the right to think, whether that was in Germany or in Hades.

Within a fortnight I was back in Berlin. I am not given to making a mountain out of every

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

little molehill I come across, but I deemed it necessary to bring the incident at Bentheim to the attention of the proper authorities.

What I wanted to know was this: Had the race which in the past produced some of the best of thinkers been coerced into having thinking prohibited by an erstwhile sergeant or a *mensur-marked assessor*?

Of course, that was not the case, I was told. The two men had been overzealous. They would be disciplined. I was not to feel that I had been insulted. An eager official might use that sort of language. After all, what special harm was there in being told not to think? Both the sergeant and the assessor had probably meant that I was not to surmise, conclude, or take things for granted.

But I had made up my mind to make myself clear. In the end I succeeded, though recourse to diagrams and the like seemed necessary before the great light dawned. That the German authorities had the right to watch their borders closely I was the last to gainsay. Nor could fault be found with officials who discharged this important duty with all the thoroughness at their command. If these officials felt inclined to warn travelers against surmise and conjecture, thanks were due them, but these officials were guilty of the grossest indecency in denying a rational adult the right to think.

Those who for years have been hunting for a definition of militarism may consider that in the above they have the best explanation of it.

THE IRON RATION

The phrase, "You have no right to think," is the very backbone of militarism. In times of war men may not think, because militarism is absolute. For those that are anti-militarist enough to continue thinking there is the censorship and sedition laws, both of which worked smoothly enough in Germany and the countries of her allies.

The question may be asked, What does this have to do with food and such? Very much, is my answer.

The class of small officials was to become the machine by which the production, distribution, and consumption of food and necessities were to be modified according to the needs of the day. This class was to stimulate production, simplify distribution, and restrict consumption. No small task for any set of men, whether they believed in the God-given right of thinking or not.

It was simple enough to restrict consumption—issue the necessary decrees with that in view, and later adopt measures of enforcement. The axiom, You have no right to think, fitted that case well enough. But it was different with distribution. To this sphere of economy belongs that ultra-modern class of Germans, the trust and *Syndikat* member—the industrial and commercial kings. These men had outgrown the inhibitions of the barrack-yard. The *Feldwebel* was a joke to them now, and, unfortunately, their newly won freedom sat so awkwardly upon their minds that often it would

WAR HITS THE LARDER OF GERMANY

slip off. The class as a whole would then attend to the case, and generally win out.

A similar state of affairs prevailed in production. To order the farmer what he was to raise was easy, but nature takes orders from nobody, a mighty official included.

II

WHEN LORD MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

GERMANY had reared a magnificent economic structure. Her prosperity was great—too great, in fact.

The country had a *nouveau-riche* aspect, as will happen when upon a people that has been content with little in the past is suddenly thrust more than it can assimilate gracefully. The Germany I was familiar with from travel and literature was a country in which men and women managed to get along comfortably by the application of thoroughness and industry—a country in which much time was given to the cultivation of the mind and the enjoyment of the fruits that come from this praiseworthy habit.

Those were the things which I had grouped under the heading, *Kultur*. Those also were the things, as I was soon to learn from the earnest men and women of the country, for which the word still stood with most. But the spirit of the *parvenu*—*Protzentum*—was become rampant. The industrial classes reeked with it.

From the villages and small towns, still the

WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

very embodiment of thrift and orderliness, I saw rise the large brick barracks of industry, topped off with huge chimneys belching forth black clouds of smoke. The outskirts of the larger towns and cities were veritable forests of smoke-stacks—palisades that surrounded the interests of the thousands of captains of industry that dwelt within the city when not frequenting the international summer and winter resorts and making themselves loathed by their extremely bad manners—the trade-mark of all *parvenus*.

I soon found that there were two separate and distinct Germanys.

It was not a question of classes, but one of having within the same borders two worlds. One of them reminded me of Goethe and Schiller, of Kant and Hegel, and the other of all that is ultra-modern, and cynical. The older of these worlds was still tilling the fields on the principle that where one takes one must give. It was still manufacturing with that honesty that is better than advertising, and selling for cost of raw material and labor, plus a reasonable profit.

In the new world it was different. Greed was the key-note of all and everything. The kings of industry and commerce had forgotten that in order to live ourselves we must let others live. These men had been wise enough to compete as little as possible with one another. Every manufacturer belonged to some *Syndikat*—trust—whose craze was to capture by means fair or foul every foreign field that could be saturated.

THE IRON RATION

I have used the word “saturated” on purpose. Germany’s industrials do not seem to have been content with merely entering a foreign market and then supplying it with that good tact which makes the article and its manufacturer respected. Instead of that they began to dump their wares into the new field in such masses that soon there was attached to really good merchandise the stigma of cheapness in price and quality. A proper sense of proportions would have prevented this. There is no doubt that German manufacturers and exporters had to undersell foreign competitors, nor can any reasonable human being find fault with this, but that, for the sake of “hogging” markets, they should turn to cheap peddling was nothing short of being criminally stupid—a national calamity.

I have yet to be convinced that Germany would not have been equally prosperous—and that in a better sense—had its industry been less subservient to the desire to capture as many of the world’s markets as possible. That policy would have led to getting better prices, so that the national income from this source would have been just as great, if not greater, when raw material and labor are given their proper socio-economic value.

Some manufacturers had indeed clung to that policy—of which the old warehouses and their counting-rooms along the Weser in Bremen are truly and beautifully emblematic. But most of them were seized with a mania for volume in export and ever-growing personal wealth.

WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

Germany's population had failed to get its share of this wealth. Though the *Arbeiter-Verbände*—unions—had seen to it that the workers were not entirely ignored, it was a fact that a large class was living in that peculiar sort of misery which comes from being the chattel of the state, on the one hand, and the beast of burden of the captains of industry, on the other. The government has indeed provided sick benefits and old-age pensions, but these, in effect, were little more than a promise that when the man was worked to the bone he would still be able to drag on existence. The several institutions of governmental paternalism in Germany are what heaven is to the lifelong invalid. And to me it seems that there is no necessity for being bedridden through life when the physician is able to cure. In this instance, we must doubt that the physician was willing to cure.

The good idealists who may differ with me on that point have probably never had the chance to study at the closest range the sinister purpose that lies behind all governmental effort that occupies itself with the welfare of the individual. The sphere of a government should begin and end with the care for the aggregate. The government that must care for the individual has no *raison d'être*, and the same must be said of the individual who needs such care. One should be permitted to perish with the other.

The deeper I got into this New Germany, the less I was favorably impressed by it. I

THE IRON RATION

soon found that the greed manifested had led to results highly detrimental to the race. The working classes of the large industrial centers were well housed and well fed, indeed. But it was a barrack life they led. At best the income was small, and usually it was all spent, especially if a man wanted to do his best by his children. It was indeed true that the deposits in the German savings-banks were unusually high, but investigation showed that the depositors were mostly small business people and farmers. These alone had both the incentive and the chance to save. For all others, be they the employees of the government or the workers of industry, the sick benefit and old-age pension had to provide if they were not to become public charges when usefulness should have come to an end.

I found that Germany's magnificent socio-economic edifice was inhabited mostly by members of the *parvenu* class, by men and women who dressed in bad taste, talked too much and too loud, and were forever painfully in evidence.

For the purpose of illustrating the relative position of the two worlds I found in Germany, I may use the simile that the new world inhabited all the better floors, while the old was content with the cellar and the attic. In the cellar lived the actual producers, and in the garret the intellectuals, poor aristocracy, government officials, professional men, and army officers.

Food being the thing everybody needs, and, which needing, he or she must have at any

WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

price, the men who in the past had "saturated" foreign markets turned of a sudden their attention to matters at home. The British blockade had made exports impossible. The overseas channel of income was closed. Exploitation had to be directed into other fields.

The German government saw this coming, and, under the plea of military necessity, which really existed, of course, began to apply a policy of restriction in railroad traffic. More will be said of this elsewhere. Here I will state that from the very first military emergency was well merged with socio-economic exigency.

The high priest of greed found that the government, by virtue of being the owner of the railroads, was putting a damper on the concentration of life's necessities and commodities. But that, after all, was not a serious matter. So long as the food shark and commodity-grabber owned an article he would always find the means to make the public pay for it. Whether he sold a thing in Cologne, Hanover, Berlin, or Stettin made little difference in the end, so long as prices were good. All that was necessary was to establish a *Filiale*—a branch house—at the point and all was well.

But as yet there was no actual shortage. Things were only beginning to be scarce at times and intervals.

The population had begun to save food. The counters and shelves of the retailers were still full, and the warehouses of the wholesalers had just received the harvest of the year.

THE IRON RATION

Hoarding had as yet not been thought of to any extent. Germany had not been at war for forty-three years, and normally the food-supply had been so generous that only a few pessimists, who saw a long war ahead, thought it necessary to store up food for the future.

It was not until the fourth month of the war that prices of food showed a steady upward tendency. That this should be so was not difficult to understand, and the explanation of the authorities appeared very plausible indeed. Whenever the possibility of a shortage had at all to be intimated, the government took good care to balance its statement with the assertion that if everybody did what was fit and proper under the circumstances there would never be a shortage. If people ate war-bread, a lack of breadstuffs was said to be out of the question.

That was very reassuring, of course. Not a little camouflage was used by the merchants. I never saw so much food heaped into store windows as in those days. On my way back and forth from my hotel to the office of the service, I had to pass through the Mauerstrasse. In that street four food-venders outdid one another in heaping their merchandise before the public gaze. One of them was a butcher. His window was large and afforded room for almost a ton of meat products.

I do not wonder that those who passed the window—and they had to be counted in thousands—gained from it the impression that food would never be scarce in Germany. Farther

WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

on there was another meat-shop. Its owner did the same. Next door to him was a bakery. War-bread and rolls, cakes and pastry enough to feed a brigade, were constantly on exhibition. The fourth store sold groceries and what is known in Germany as *Dauerware*—food that has been preserved, such as smoked meat, sausages, and canned foods. The man was really doing his best. For a while he had as his “set piece” a huge German eagle formed of cervelat sausages each four feet long and as thick as the club of Hercules. I thought the things had been made of papier-mâché, but found that they were real enough.

But camouflage of that sort has its good purposes. Men are never so hungry as when they know that food is scarce.

The several state governments of Germany employ the ablest economic experts in the world. These men knew that in the end show would not do. The substance would then be demanded and would have to be produced if trouble was to be avoided. How to proceed was not a simple matter, however. From the food of the nation had to come the revenue of the government and the cost of the war. This had to be kept in mind.

The assertions of the Entente press that Germany would be starved into submission within six months had been amply ridiculed in the German newspapers. That was all very well. Everybody knew that it could not be done in six months, and my first survey of the food situ-

THE IRON RATION

ation proved that it could not be done in a year. But what if the war lasted longer? Nothing had come of the rush on Paris. Hindenburg had indeed given the Russians a thorough military lesson at Tannenberg. But this and certain successes on the West Front were not decisive, as everybody began to understand. The Russians, moreover, were making much headway in Galicia, and so far the Austro-Hungarian army had made but the poorest of showings—even against the Serbs.

Thus it came that the replies in the German press to the Entente famine program caused the German public to take a greater interest in the food question. Propaganda and the application of ridicule have their value, but also their drawbacks. They are never shell-proof so far as the thinker is concerned, and ultimately will weaken rather than strengthen the very thing they are intended to defend.

“Qui s’excuse s’accuse,” say the French.

The Prussian government inaugurated a campaign against the waste of food as associated with the garbage-pail. Hereafter all household offal had to be separated into food-remains and rubbish. Food-leavings, potato peels, fruit skins, the unused parts of vegetables, and the like, were to be used as animal feed.

A week after the regulations had been promulgated and enforced, I took a census of the results obtained. These were generous enough and showed that as yet the Berliners at least were not stinting very much, despite the war-bread.

Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

PROVING-GROUND OF THE KRUPP WORKS AT ESSEN

The guns shown represent types of artillery used in modern warfare on land and sea.





WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

About the same time I was able to ascertain that in the rural districts of Germany little economy of any sort was being practised so far, though the establishing by the government of Fodder Centrals was warning enough. The farmers sat at the very fountain-head of all food and pleased themselves, wasting meanwhile much of their substance by sending to their relatives at the front a great deal of food which the men were in no need of. The German soldier was well fed and all food sent to him was generally so much waste. It was somewhat odd that the government should not only permit this practice, but actually encourage it. But the authorities knew as little yet of food conservation as did the populace.

So far the traffic incident to supplying large population centers with food had moved within its regular channels, the interference due to the mobilization duly discounted, of course. The ability of the Germans as organizers had even overcome that to quite an extent. There were delays now and then, but the reserve stores in the cities counteracted them as yet.

Normally, all men eat too much. The Germans were the rule rather than the exception in this respect. Most men weighed anything from twenty to sixty pounds more than they should, and the women also suffered much in appearance and health from obesity. The *parvenu* class, especially, was noted for that. The German aristocrat is hardly ever stout—hall-mark of the fact that he knows how to curb his appetites.

THE IRON RATION

Before the war most Germans ate in the following manner:

Coffee and rolls early in the morning. A sort of breakfast about nine o'clock. Luncheon between twelve and one. Coffee or tea at about four in the afternoon. Dinner at from seven to eight, and supper at eleven or twelve was nothing unusual. That made in many cases six meals, and these meals were not light by any means. They included meat twice for even the poorer classes in the city.

Six meals as against three do not necessarily mean that people addicted to the habit eat twice as much as those who are satisfied with sitting at table thrice each day. But they do mean that at least 35 per cent. of the food is wasted. Oversaturated, the alimentary system refuses to work properly. It will still assimilate those food elements that are the more easily absorbed, which then produce fat, while the really valuable constituents are generally eliminated without having produced the effect that is the purpose of proper diet.

It was really remarkable to what extent in this case an indulgence became a reserve upon which the German government could draw. A good 35 per cent. of all food consumed need not be consumed and would to that measure increase the means of public subsistence available.

I am inclined to believe that the enemies of Germany overlooked this fact in the computation of elements adduced to show that, within six months from the outbreak of the war, famine

WHEN MARS HAD RULED THREE MONTHS

would stalk the land. The Entente economists and politicians counted on actual production and consumption in times of peace and failed to realize that a determined people, whose complete discipline lacked but this one thing—economy in eating—would soon acquire the mind of the ascetic.

It was not easy to forego the pleasures of the full stomach, since in the past it had generally been overfilled. But, as the Germans say, "When in need, the devil will eat flies."

Upon this subject the Prussian and other German state governments concentrated all their efforts in November of 1914. A thousand methods of propaganda were used. "Eat less," was the advice that resounded through the empire. I do not think that, unsustained by government action, the admonition would have helped much in the long run, though for the time being it was heeded by many. It was the fact that the end of the war seemed not so imminent any longer which furnished the *causa movens* for the saving of food. The war spirit was still very strong and the Germans began to resent the assertion of their enemies that they would be defeated by their stomachs, as some learned university professors insisted at the time. Not the least value of the propaganda was that it prepared the German public for the sweeping changes in food distribution which were to come before long.

III

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

THREE months had sufficed to enthrone the *Kriegslieferant*—war purveyor. He was ubiquitous and loud. His haying season was come. For a consumer he had a government that could not buy enough, and the things he sold he took from a public that was truly patriotic and willing to make sacrifices. It was a gay time. Gone were the days in which he had to worry over foreign markets, small profits, and large turnover. He dealt no longer with fractions of cents. Contracts for thousands did not interest him. At the Ministry of War he could pick up bits of business that figured with round millions.

I attended once a funeral that was presided over by an undertaker who believed in doing things on a large scale. The man in the coffin had always earned a large salary and the family had lived up to it. There was nothing left when he died. But the undertaker and the widow decided that the funeral should be a large one. It was, and when it was over and paid for the woman was obliged to appeal to her relatives

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

for financial aid. The activity of the war purveyor was of the same quality.

The Berlin hotels were doing a land-office business. The Adlon, Bristol, Kaiserhof, and Esplanade hotels were crowded to the attic—with war purveyors. When his groups were not locked up in conference, he could be seen strutting about the halls and foyers with importance radiating from him like the light of an electric arc. In the dining-rooms his eating could be heard when his voice was not raised in vociferous ordering in the best drill-sergeant style. Managers and waiters alike danced attention upon him—the establishment, the city, the country were his.

“Wir machen’s” (“We’ll do it”), was his parole. The army might do its share, but in the end the war purveyor would win the war.

The express in which I was traveling from Osnabrück to Berlin had pulled up in the station of Hanover. The train was crowded and in my compartment sat three war purveyors, who seemed to be members of the same group, despite the fact that their conversation caused me to believe that they were holding anything from a million tons of hay to a thousand army transport-wagons. Business was good and the trio was in good humor, as was to be expected from men of such generous dimensions and with so many diamonds on the fleshy fingers of ill-kept hands. One of them was the conspicuous owner of a stick-pin crowned with a Kimberley that weighed five carats if not more. He was

THE IRON RATION

one of the happiest men I have ever laid eyes upon.

I was sitting next to the window, a place that had been surrendered to me because there was a draught from the window. But I can stand such discomfort much better than perfume on a fat man, and I didn't mind.

After a while my attention was attracted by a tall young woman in black on the platform. She was talking to somebody on my car, and surreptitious passes of her hand to her throat caused me to conclude that some great emotion had seized her. No doubt she was saying good-by to somebody.

I had seen that a thousand times before, so that it could not be mere and superficial curiosity that induced me to leave my seat for the purpose of seeing the other actor in this little drama. The woman was unusually handsome, and the manner in which she controlled her great emotion showed that she was a blue-blood of the best brand. I was anxious to learn what sort of man it was upon whom this woman bestowed so much of her devotion.

A tall officer was leaning against the half-open window in the next compartment. I could not see his face. But the cut of his back and shoulders and the silhouette of the head proclaimed his quality.

The two seemed to have no words. The woman was looking into the face of the man, and he, to judge by the fixed poise of his head, was looking into hers.

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

I had seen enough and returned to the compartment. Presently the conductor's cry of "*Bitte, einsteigen!*" ("Please! All aboard!") was heard. The woman stepped to the side of the car and raised her right hand, which the officer kissed. She said something which I could not hear. Then she set her lips again, while the muscles of her cheek and throat moved in agony. It was a parting dramatic—perhaps the last.

The train began to move. The war purveyor opposite me now saw the woman. He nudged his colleague and drew his attention to the object that had attracted him.

"A queen!" he said. "I wonder what she looks like in her boudoir. I am sorry that I did not see her before. Might have stayed over and seen her home."

"Would have been worth while," said the other. "I wonder whom she saw off."

"From the way she takes it I should say that it was somebody she cares for. Class, eh, what?"

The man rose from the seat and pressed his face against the window, though he could see no more of the woman in that manner than he had seen before.

I think that is the very extreme to which I ever saw hideously vulgar cynicism carried.

In a way I regretted that the war purveyor had not been given the chance to stay over. I am sure that he would have had reason to regret his enterprise.

A few days later I was on my way to Vienna, glad to get away from the loud-mouthed war

THE IRON RATION

purveyors at the German capital. The ilk was multiplying like flies in summer-time, and there was no place it had not invaded.

Though it was really not one of my affairs, the war purveyor had come to irritate me. I was able to identify him a mile off, and good-natured friends of mine seemed to have made it their purpose in life to introduce me to men who invariably turned out to have contracts with the government. Fact is that, while the war was great, the *Kriegslieferant* was greater. When I found it hard to see a high official, some kind friend would always suggest that I take the matter up with Herr Kommerzienrat So-and-so, whose influence was great with the authorities, seeing that he had just made a contract for ever so many millions.

And the "commercial counselor" would be willing, I knew. If he could introduce a foreign correspondent of some standing here and there, that would be water for his mill. The official in question might be interested in propaganda, and the war purveyor was bound to be. The inference was that the cause of Germany could be promoted in that manner. In some cases it was. Now and then the war purveyor would spend money on a dinner to foreign and native correspondents. His name would not appear in the despatches, but the *Kriegslieferant* saw to it that the authorities learned of his activities. After that the margin of profit on contract might go up.

For a man who had conceived a violent prej-

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

udice against war purveyors, Berlin was not a comfortable place.

I was either playing in bad luck or half the world had turned into war purveyors. At any rate, I had one of them as travel companion *en route* to Vienna. The man dealt in leather. He had a contract for the material of 120,000 pairs of army boots and was now going to Austria and Hungary for the purpose of buying it. He was a most interesting person. Before the war he had dealt in skins for gloves, but now he had taken to a related branch in order that he might "do his bit." The Fatherland, in its hour of need, depended upon the efforts of its sons. So far as he was concerned no stone would be left unturned to secure victory. He could be home attending to his regular business, instead of racing hither and thither in search of leather. But duty was duty.

I might have gotten the man to admit that he made a *small* profit on his patriotic endeavor. But that could serve no purpose. I feared, moreover, that this would needlessly prolong the conversation. When the war purveyor finally tired of my inattention, he took up his papers and I surveyed the country we were passing through.

For the finest rural pictures in Central Europe we must go to Austria. The houses of the peasants, in villages and on farms alike, had a very inviting appearance. I noticed that the walls had been newly whitewashed. There was fresh paint on the window shutters, and new

THE IRON RATION

tiles among the old showed that the people were keeping their roofs in good repair, which was more than the government was doing with the state edifice just then. Prosperity still laughed everywhere.

The train raced through small towns and villages. At the railroad crossings chubby youngsters off for school were being detained by the gateman. A buxom lass was chasing geese around a yard. Elsewhere a man was sawing wood, while a woman looked on. From the chimneys curled skyward the smoke of the hearth.

It was hard to believe that the country was at war. But the groups of men in uniform at the stations, and the recruits and reservists herded in by men-at-arms over the country roads, left no doubt as to that. If this had not been sufficient proof for me, there was the war purveyor.

In Austria, as well as in Germany, the fields had had the closest attention. And that attention was kind. Exploitation had no room in it. Though it was late in the season, I could still discern that plowing and fertilizing were most carefully done. The hedges and fences were in good repair. In vain did I look for the herald of slovenly farming—the rusty plow in the field, left where the animals had been taken from under the yoke. Orderliness was in evidence everywhere, and, therefore, human happiness could not be absent.

There was a great deal of crop traffic on the good roads, and the many water-mills seemed very busy. Potatoes and sugar-beets were being

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

gathered to add their munificence to the great grain- and hay-stacks. I ran over in mind some population and farm-production statistics and concluded that Austria was indeed lucky in having so large a margin of food production over food consumption.

What I had settled to my own satisfaction on the train was seemingly confirmed at Vienna. Not even a trace of food shortness could I find there. There had been a slight increase in food prices, but this was a negligible quantity in times such as these.

The Vienna restaurants and cafés were serving wheat bread, butter, and cream as before. In a single place I identified as many as thirty-seven different varieties of cakes and pastry. Everybody was drinking coffee with whipped cream—*Kaffee mit Obers*—and nobody gave food conservation a thought. While the Berlin bills of fare had been generous, to say the least, those of Vienna were nothing short of wasteful. Even that of the well-known Hardman emporium on the Kärntner Ring, not an extravagant place by any means, enumerated no less than one hundred and forty-seven separate items *à la carte*.

I thought of the elephant steak and marveled at the imagination of some people. It seemed that in Austria such titbits were a long way off. A *mélée* of Viennese cooking, Austrian wine, and Hungarian music would have left anybody under that impression.

But all is not gold that glitters!

At the hotel where I was staying, a small

THE IRON RATION

army of German food-buyers was lodged. From some of them I learned what food conditions in Germany might be a year hence. These men were familiar with the needs of their country, and thought it out of place to be optimistic. The drain on farm labor and the shortage of fertilizer were the things they feared most. They were buying right and left at almost any price, and others were doing the same thing in Hungary, I was informed.

These men were not strictly war purveyors. Most of them bought supplies for the regular channels of trade, but they were buying in a manner that was bound to lead to high prices. It was a question of getting quantities, and if these could not be had at one price they had to be bought at a higher.

Within two days I had established that the war purveyors at Vienna were more rapacious than those at Berlin. But I will say for them that they had better manners in public places. They were not so loud—a fact which helped them greatly in business, I think. Personally, I prefer the polished Shylock to the loutish glutton. It is a weakness that has cost me a little money now and then, but, like so many of our weaknesses, it goes to make up polite life.

Vienna's hotels were full of *Kriegslieferanten*. The *portiers* and waiters addressed them as “*Baron*” and “*Graf*” (count), and for this bestowal of letters-patent nobility were rewarded with truly regal tips. But there the matter ended.

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

I was holding converse with the *portier* of the Hotel Bristol when a war purveyor came up and wanted to know whether telegrams had arrived for him—the war purveyor never uses the mail.

“*Nein, Herr Graf,*” replied the *portier*.

The war purveyor seemed inclined to blame the *portier* for this. After some remarks, alleging slovenliness on the part of somebody and everybody in so impersonal a manner that even I felt guilty, he turned away.

The *portier*—I had known him a day—seemed to place much confidence in me, despite the fact that so far he had not seen the color of my money.

“That fellow ought to be hung!” he said, as he looked at the revolving door that was spinning madly under the impulse which the wrathful war purveyor had given it. “He is a pig!”

“But how could a count be a pig?” I asked, playfully.

“He isn’t a count at all,” was the *portier’s* remark. “You see, that is a habit we easy-going Viennese have. The fellow has engaged one of our best suites and the title of count goes with that. It may interest you to know that years ago the same suite was occupied by Prince Bismarck.”

There is no reason why in tradition-loving and nobility-adoring Austria the title of count should not thereafter attach to any person occupying a suite of rooms so honored. For all that, it is a peculiar mentality that makes

THE IRON RATION

an honorary count an animal of uncleanly habits within the space of a few seconds.

The Grand Hotel was really the citadel of the Austro-Hungarian war purveyors. Every room was taken by them, and the splendid dining-room of the establishment was crammed with them during meal-hours. Dinner was a grandiose affair. The *Kriegslieferanten* were in dinner coats and bulging shirt-fronts, and the ladies wore all their jewels. Two of the war-purveyor couples were naturalized Americans, and one of them picked me up before I knew what had happened.

While I was in Vienna I was to be their guest. It seems that the man had made a contract with the Austrian Ministry of War for ever so many thousands of tons of canned meat. He thought that his friends "back home" might be interested in that, and that there was no better way of having the news broken to them than by means of a despatch to my service. There is no doubt whatever that being a war purveyor robs a man of his sense of proportions.

To see the Vienna war purveyor at his best it was necessary to wait until midnight and visit the haunts he frequented, such as the Femina, Trocadero, Chapeau Rouge, Café Capua, and Carlton cabarets. Vienna's *demi-monde* never knew such spenders. The memory of certain harebrained American tourists faded into nothingness. Champagne flowed in rivers, and the hothouses were unable to meet the demand for flowers—at last one shortage. The gipsy

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

fiddlers took nothing less than five crowns, and the waiters called it a poor evening when the tips fell below what formerly they had been satisfied with in a month.

All of this came from the pockets of the public, and when these pockets began to show the bottom the government obligingly increased the currency by the products of the press. More money was needed by everybody. The morrow was hardly given a thought, and the sanest moment most people had was when they concluded that these were times in which it was well to let the evils of the day be sufficient thereof. One never knew when the Russians might spill over the Tartra and the Carpathians, in which case it would be all over. The light-heartedness which is so characteristic of the Austrians reached degrees that made the serious observer wonder. *Après nous le déluge*, was the motto of the times. So long as there was food enough, champagne to be had, and women to share these, the Russians could have the rest.

I speculated how long this could go on. The military situation could be handled by the Germans, and would be taken in hand by them sooner or later. That much I learned in Berlin. But the Germans were powerless in the Austro-Hungarian economic departments. Though the Dual Monarchy had been self-contained entirely in food matters before the war, it seemed certain that the squandering of resources that was going on could in the end have but one result—shortage in everything.

THE IRON RATION

Despite that, Austrian government officials were highly optimistic. Starve out Austria and Hungary! Why, that was out of the question entirely—*ausgeschlossen!* At some statistical bureau on the Schwarzenbergstrasse I was given figures that were to show the impossibility of the Entente's design to reduce the country by hunger. These figures were imposing, I will admit, and after I had studied them I had the impression that famine was indeed a long way off. It seemed that the Stürgkh régime knew what it was doing, after all, as I had been told at the government offices. Everything would be well, even if the war should be long.

Two weeks later I was at the Galician front. Going there I passed through northern Hungary. The barns of that district were bursting. The crops had been good, I was told. Every siding was crowded with cars loaded with sugar-beets and potatoes, and out in the fields the sturdy women of the race, short-skirted and high-booted, were taking from the soil more beets and more potatoes. The harvesting of these crops had been delayed by the absence of the men, due to the mobilizations. By the time I reached Neu-Sandez in Galicia, then seat of the Austro-Hungarian general headquarters, I had fully convinced myself that the Entente's program of starvation was very much out of the question.

I found that the soldiers were well fed. The wheeled field kitchens were spreading appetizing smells over the countryside, and that their out-

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

put was good was shown by the fine physical condition of the men.

Having established this much, and the Russians coming altogether too close, I had occasion a week later to visit Budapest. In that city everybody was eating without a thought of the future, and that eating was good, as will be attested by anybody who has ever sat down to a Budapestian lamb *pörkölt*, of which the American goulash is a sort of degenerate descendant. The only other thing worth mentioning is that the Astoria Hotel was the only place in town not entirely occupied by the war purveyors.

A trip through central and southern Hungary served merely to complete and confirm what I have already said here, and when later I took a look at Croatia, and the parts of Serbia known to-day as the Machwa, I began to realize why the Romans had thought these parts so necessary to them. Soil and climate here are the best any farmer could wish for. The districts are famous for their output in pork and prunes.

With the Russians firmly rooted in Galicia, and with the Austro-Hungarian troops driven out of Serbia, my usefulness as a war correspondent was temporarily at an end. I returned to Budapest and later visited Vienna and Berlin. The food situation was unchanged. Austria and Hungary were consuming as before, and Germany was buying right and left. The course of the German mark was still high, despite the first issuance of Loan-Treasury notes, supported as it was by the generous surrender of much

THE IRON RATION

gold by the German people. Purchasable stores were still plentiful throughout southeast Europe.

Despite that, the subject of food intruded everywhere. More concerned than it was willing to admit, the German government was gathering every morsel. Several neutral governments, among them the Dutch, Danish, Swiss, and Norwegian, had already declared partial embargoes on food, and these the German government had made up its mind to meet. It had in its hands the means to do this most effectively.

There was Holland, for instance. Her government had reduced the export of food to Germany to a veritable minimum even then, as I learned on a trip to The Hague in December. That was well enough, but not without consequences. Holland has in Limburg a single mine of lignite coal. The output is small and suited for little more than gas production. But the country had to get coal from somewhere, if her railroads were to run, the wheels of industry to turn; if the ships were to steam and the cities to be lighted and heated.

Much of the coal consumed in Holland in the past had been imported from Belgium. But that country was in the hands of the Germans. The British government had made the taking of bunker coal contingent upon conditions which the Dutch government thought unreasonable. The Dutch were between the devil and the deep blue sea. Coal they had to get, and Germany was the only country willing to supply that coal —provided there was a *quid pro quo* in kind.

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

There was nothing to do but accept the terms of the Germans, which were coal for food.

The bartering which had preceded the making of these arrangements had been very close and stubborn. The Dutch government did not want to offend the British government. It could not afford, on the other hand, to earn the ill-will of the Germans. I had occasion to occupy myself with the case, and when my inquiry had been completed I had gained the impression that the German government had left nothing undone to get from the Dutch all the food that could be had. The inconsistency displayed and applied was such that it was difficult to reconcile with it the easy manner in which the subject of food had been discussed in Berlin. It seemed that the food and live-stock enumerations that had been made throughout the German Empire had given cause for anxiety.

In January of 1915 I was sent to the Balkans for the purpose of surveying the political situation there. While in transit to Roumania I had once more taken stock in Berlin. No great change in food-supply conditions could be noticed. The war-bread was there, of course. But those who did not care to eat it did not have to do so. In Vienna they lived as before, and in Budapest they boastfully pointed to their full boards.

But in Bucharest I once more ran into food actualities. Thousands of German commissioners were buying everything they could lay hands on, and with them co-operated hundreds of Austro-Hungarians who had long been resi-

THE IRON RATION

dents of Roumania, and many of whom stood high on the grain exchange of Braila.

Accident caused me to put up at the Palace Hotel, which was the headquarters of the grain-buyers. In the lobby of the establishment thousands of tons of cereals changed hands every hour.

I evinced some interest in the trading in speaking to the man behind the desk.

"Yes, sir! All these men are German grain-dealers," explained the Balkanite *portier* to me. "This hotel is their headquarters. If you don't happen to sympathize with them, no harm will be done if you move to another hotel. There are many in town."

But I don't mind being spoken to frankly, and since I had no special interests in grain-dealers of any sort, there was no reason why I should move, especially since the *portier* had invited me to do that. By that time, also, I had traveled enough in Europe at war to know that discretion is always the better part of valor, and that being unperturbed was the best insurance against trouble. The German grain-dealers were doing a good business.

It was easy to buy, but not so easy to export. Premier Bratianu did not like the transactions that were going on, and had passed the word to the management of the Roumanian state railroads that the traffic was to move as slowly as possible. There are ways and means of overcoming that sort of instruction, and the German grain-dealers found them. Far be it from me to

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

run here a full record of bribery in Bucharest. I may state, however, that money left deep scars on many a fairly good character in those days. The influence and persuasion of the *chanteuses et danseuses* of the cabarets on the Calea Victoriei played often a great rôle in cereal exports. I gained personal knowledge of a case in which a four-karat diamond secured the immediate release of eight thousand tons of wheat, and in that wheat was buried a large quantity of crude rubber, the slabs of which carried the name of a large automobile-tire manufacturer in Petrograd. Such things will happen when the ladies take a hand in war subsistence.

My special mission now was to study the political situation on the Balkan peninsula and finally end up somewhere in Turkey. I did both.

In Sofia the government was painfully neutral in those days. There was as yet no reason why the Germans should buy grain there, but contracts were being made for the next crop. Wool was also being bought, and many hides moved north into Germany and Austria-Hungary. But the deals were of an eminently respectable sort. Bribery was out of the question.

The trouble was that the shipments secured in Bulgaria never reached their destination unless bribes moved the trains. The Serbs held the central reaches of the Danube, which, in addition to this, was ice-bound just then, and all freight from Bulgaria, going north, had to be taken through Roumania. To get them into that country was simple enough, but to get them

THE IRON RATION

out took more cash, more diamonds, and considerable champagne. In a single month the price of that beverage in Bucharest jumped from eighteen to forty francs, and, as if to avenge themselves, the Germans began shortly to refill the shelves with "champus" made along the Rhine.

With Bulgaria explored and described, I set out for Turkey, where, at Constantinople, in July of that year, I ran into the first bread-line formed by people "who had the price."

The Ottoman capital gets its food-supplies normally over the waterways that give access to the city—the Bosphorus from the north and the Black Sea and the Dardanelles from the south and the Mediterranean. Both of these avenues of trade and traffic were now closed. The Russians kept the entrance to the Bosphorus well patrolled, and the French and British saw to it that nothing entered the Dardanelles, even if they themselves could not navigate the strait very far, as some eight months' stay with the Turkish armed forces at the Dardanelles and on Gallipoli made very plain to me.

The Anatolian Railroad, together with a few unimportant tap lines, was now the only means of reaching the agricultural districts of Asia Minor—the Konia Vilayet and the Cilician Plain, for instance. But the line is single-tracked and was just then very much overloaded with military transports. The result of this was that Constantinople ate up what stores there were, and then waited for more.

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

There was more, of course. The Ottoman Empire is an agricultural state, and would be more of one if the population could see its way clear to doing without the goat and the fat-tailed sheep. That its capital and only large city should be without breadstuff as early as July, 1915, was hard to believe, yet a fact.

In May of that year I had made a trip through Anatolia, Syria, and Arabia. By that time the crops in Asia Minor are well advanced and wheat is almost ripe. These crops were good, but, like the crops of the preceding season, which had not yet been moved, owing to the war, they were of little value to the people of Constantinople. They could not be had.

I hate estimates, and for that reason will not indulge in them here. But the fact is that from Eregli, in the Cappadocian Plain, to Eskishehir, on the Anatolian high plateau, I saw enough wheat rotting at the railroad stations to supply the Central Powers for two years. Not only was every shed filled with the grain, but the farmers who had come later were obliged to store theirs out in the open, where it lay without shelter of any sort. Rain and warmth had caused the grain on top to sprout lustily, while the inside of the heap was rotting. The railroad and the government promised relief day after day, but both were unable to bring it over the single track, which was given over, almost entirely, to military traffic.

Thus it came that the shops of the *ekmekdjis* in Constantinople were besieged by hungry

THE IRON RATION

thousands, the merest fraction of whom ever got the loaf which the ticket, issued by the police, promised. That was not all, however. Speculators and dealers soon discerned their chance of making money and were not slow in availing themselves of it. Prices rose until the poor could buy nothing but corn meal. A corner in olives added to the distress of the multitude, and the government, with that ineptness which is typical of government in Turkey, failed to do anything that had practical value. Though the Young Turks had for a while set their faces against corruption, many of the party leaders had relapsed, with the result that little was done to check the rapacity of the dealer who hoarded for purposes of speculation and price-boosting.

Yet those in the Constantinople bread-lines were modest in their normal demands. Turk and Levantine manage to get along well on a diet of bread and olives, with a little *pilaff*—a rice dish—and a small piece of meat, generally mutton, once a day thrown in. With a little coffee for the Turk, and a glass of red wine for the Levantine, this is a very agreeable bill of fare, and a good one, as any expert in dietetics will affirm.

I had occasion to discuss the food shortage in Turkey with Halideh Edib Hannym Effendi, Turkey's leading feminist and education promoter.

She assigned two causes. One of them was the lack of transportation, to which I have

THE MIGHTY WAR PURVEYOR

already referred as coming under my own observation. The other was found in the ineptness of the Ottoman government. She was of the opinion that there was enough food in the Bosphorus region, but that the speculators were holding it for higher prices. This, too, was nothing new to me. But it was interesting to hear a Turkish woman's opinion on this nefarious practice. To the misfortune of war the greedy were adding their lust for possession, and the men in Stamboul lacked the courage to say them nay. That men like Enver Pasha and Talaat Bey, who had taken upon themselves the responsibility of having Turkey enter the lists of the European War, were now afraid to put an end to food speculation, showed what grip the economic pirate may lay upon a community. What the Allied fleet and military forces at the Dardanelles and on Gallipoli had not accomplished the food sharks had done. Before them the leaders of the Young Turks had taken to cover.

IV

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

THAT the food question should have become acute first in a state as distinctly agricultural as the Ottoman Empire furnishes an apt illustration of the fact that in the production of food man-power is all-essential. The best soil and climate lose their value when farming must be neglected on account of a shortage of labor. The plants providing us with breadstuff are the product of evolution. At one time they were mere grasses, as their tendency to revert to that state, when left to themselves, demonstrates in such climates as make natural propagation possible. It is believed that the "oat grass" on the South African veldt is a case of that sort.

But apart from all that, every cropping season shows that man, in order to have bread, must plow, sow, cultivate, and reap. When the soil is no longer able to supply the cereal plants with the nutriment they need, fertilizing becomes necessary.

I have shown that bread-lines formed in Constantinople when out in the Anatolian vil-

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

yets the wheat was rotting at the side of the railroad track. This was due to defects and handicaps in distribution. But there was also another side to this. I made several trips through Thrace, that part of the Ottoman Empire which lies in Europe, and found that its rich valleys and plains could have supplied the Turkish capital with all the wheat it needed had the soil been cultivated. This had not been done, however. The mobilizations had taken so many men from the *tchiftliks*—farms—that a proper tilling of the fields was out of the question. A shortage in grain resulted, and the food sharks were thus enabled to exact a heavy tribute from the public.

It is a case of hard times with the speculator when things are plentiful. He is then unable to gather in all of the supply. There is a leakage which he does not control and that leakage causes his defeat in the end. It is a well-known fact that a corner in wheat is impossible, and a dangerous undertaking, so long as from 15 to 30 per cent. of the grain remains uncontrolled. That quantity represents the excess profit which the speculator counts upon. Not to control it means that the supply available to the consumer is large enough to keep the price near its normal curves, to which the speculator must presently adhere if he is not to lose money on his corner.

But a great deal depends upon how corrupt the government is. The Turk-Espaniole clique in Stamboul and Pera had cornered the Thracian

THE IRON RATION

wheat crop in 1915, and the Anatolian Railroad was unable to bring in enough breadstuff from Anatolia and Syria. The bread-lines were the result.

It was not much better in Austria and Hungary. Here, too, production had fallen off about one-fifth, and the many war purveyors, who had been driven out of business by saner systems of army purchasing, had turned their attention to foods of any sort. In Germany the same thing happened in a slightly less degree.

Since in the Central states the bread ticket had meanwhile been introduced, and the quality and price of bread fixed, one may ask the question: Why was bread short in those countries when formerly they produced fully 95 per cent. of their breadstuffs?

The answer is that, firstly, production had fallen off, and, secondly, there was much cornering by the speculators.

It must be borne in mind that bread regulation so far consisted of attempts by the government to provide for the multitude bread at a reasonable price, without distribution being placed under efficient control. The rapacity of the food shark had forced up the price of breadstuffs, and nothing but government interference could check the avarice of the dealers. But the population had to have cheap bread, and attention had to be given the paucity of the supply. Fixed prices were to make possible the former, and a limitation in consumption was to overcome the latter.

FAMINE COMES TO STAY¹

It will be seen that this procedure left the food shark a free hand. He could buy as before and sell when and to whom he pleased. Thus it came that, while the masses of Germany and Austria-Hungary had to eat war-bread in prescribed quantities, those better off materially still had their wheat-flour products. The authorities were not ignorant of this, but had good reason not to interfere. The time was come when the financial resources of the country had to be "mobilized," and this was being done by extracting from the population all the spare coin and concentrating it in the hands of the food speculators so that these could be taxed and enabled to buy war loans. These men were easily dealt with. Very often they were bankers, and kings of industry and commerce. To provide the government with funds for the war was to them a question of profit.

The bread ticket did not favor an equitable distribution, nor was it ever intended to do that. Its sole purpose at first was to tax food in such a manner that those who were willing to buy more food than the bread ticket prescribed had to pay heavily for this indulgence. That this was a socio-economic injustice was plain to those who reasoned far enough. But the patient rabble accepted the thing at its face value, as it will accept most things that bear the stamp of authority.

I had no difficulty anywhere in getting all the wheat bread and farinaceous dishes I wanted. It was not even necessary to ask for them.

THE IRON RATION

It was taken for granted that I belonged to the class that did not have to eat war-bread and do without pudding and cake, and that was enough. While I was supposed to have a bread ticket, few ever asked for it. In the restaurants which I frequented I generally found a dinner roll hidden under the napkin, which for that purpose was as a rule folded in the manner known as the "bishop's miter."

But gone for the many was the era of enough food. The bread ration in Berlin was three hundred grams (ten and a half ounces) per day, and in Vienna it was two hundred and ten grams (seven and two-fifths ounces). Together with a normal supply of other eatables, flour for cooking, for instance, these rations were not really short, and in my case they were generous. But with most it was now a question of paying abnormally high prices for meat and the like, so that enough bread was more of a necessity than ever.

It was rather odd that in Austria the bread ration should be smaller than in Germany. That country had in the past produced more breadstuff per capita than her ally, and would have been able to import from Hungary had conditions been different. Hungary had in the past exported wheat flour to many parts, due largely to the fine quality of her grain. Now, of a sudden, it, too, faced a shortage.

The fact is that Austria-Hungary had mobilized a large part of her male population and had for that reason been extremely short of farm

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

labor during the season of 1915. The large reserve stores had been exhausted by improvidence, and, to make things worse, the crops of that year were not favored by the weather. Meanwhile, much of the wheat had passed into the hands of the speculators, who were releasing it only when their price was paid. In Austria the bread ticket was the convenient answer to all complaints, and in Hungary, where the bread ticket was not generally introduced as yet, the food shark had the support of the government to such an extent that criticism of his methods was futile. Now and then an enterprising editor would be heard from—as far as his press-room, where the censor caused such hardihoods to be routed from the plate.

The food outlook in Austria-Hungary was no pleasant one. Drastic regulation would be needed to alleviate conditions.

It was no better in Germany, as a trip to Berlin showed. Food had indeed become a problem in the Central states of Europe.

The same area had been put under crops in 1915; the area had even been somewhat extended by advice of the governments that all fallow lands be sown. But the harvest had not been good. The shortage of trained farmers, lack of animal-power, and the paucity of fertilizers had done exactly what was to be expected. Then, the growing season had not been favorable. The year had been wet, and much of the grain had been ruined even after it was ripe.

For the purpose of investigating conditions

THE IRON RATION

at close range I made a few trips into the country districts. The large landowners, the farmers, and the villagers had the same story to tell. Not enough hands, shortage of horses and other draft animals, little manure, and a poor season.

One of the men with whom I discussed the aspects of farming under the handicaps which the war was imposing was Joachim Baron von Bredow-Wagenitz, a large landowner in the province of Brandenburg. As owner of an estate that had been most successful under scientific methods of farming, he was well qualified to discuss the situation.

He had tried steam-plowing and found it wanting. The man was on the verge of believing that Mother Earth resented being treated in that manner. The best had been done to make steam-plowing as good as the other form. But something seemed to have gone wrong. There was no life in the crops. It was a question of fertilizing, my informant concluded. The theory, which had been held, that there was enough reserve plant nutriment in the soil to produce a good crop at least one season with indifferent fertilization, was evidently incorrect, or correct only in so far as certain crop plants were concerned.

Baron Bredow had employed some threescore of Russian prisoners on his place. Some of the men had worked well, but most of them had shown ability only in shirking.

The older men and the women had done their best to get something out of the soil, but they

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

were unable, in the first place, to stand the physical strain, and, secondly, they lacked the necessary experience in the departments which the men at the front had looked after.

Elsewhere in Germany it was the same story. It simply was impossible to discount the loss of almost four million men who had by that time been withdrawn from the soil and were now consuming more than ever before without producing a single thing, as yet.

To show what that really meant let me cite a few factors that are easily grasped. The population of the German Empire was then, roundly, 70,000,000 persons. Of this number 35,000,000 were women. Of the 35,000,000 men all individuals from birth to the age of fifteen were virtually consumers only, while those from fifty years onward were more or less in the same class. Accepting that the average length of life in Central Europe is fifty-five years, we find that the male producers in 1915 numbered about 20,000,000, and of this number about one-half was then either at the fronts or under military training. Of these 10,000,000 roughly 4,200,000 had formerly occupied themselves with the production and distribution of food. I need not state that this army formed quite the best element in food production for the simple reason that it was composed of men in the prime of life.

A survey in Austria showed not only the same conditions, but also indicated that the worst was yet to come. Austria and Hungary had then

THE IRON RATION

under the colors about 5,000,000 men, of whom, roundly, 2,225,000 came from the fields and food industries, so that agriculture was even worse off in the Dual Monarchy than it was in Germany.

The large landowners in Austria and Hungary told the same story as Baron Bredow. Experiences tallied exactly. They, too, had found it impossible to get the necessary labor, for either love or money. It simply was not in the country, and with many of the Austrian and Hungarian land-operators the labor given by the Russian prisoner of war was next thing to being nothing at all. The Russians felt that they were being put to work against the interest of their country, and many of them seemed to like the idleness of the prison camp better than the work that was expected of them on the estates, though here they were almost free.

I remember especially the experiences of Count Erdödy, a Hungarian nobleman and owner of several big estates. After trying every sort of available male labor, he finally decided to cultivate his lands with the help of women. The thing was not a success by any means, but when he came to compare notes with his neighbors he found that, after all, the women had done much better than the men on his neighbors' estates. As a sign of the times I should mention here that Count Erdödy, no longer a young man, would spend weeks at a stretch doing the heaviest of farm work, labor in which he was assisted by his American wife and two daughters, one of whom could work a plow as well as any man.

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

The war had ceased to be an affair that would affect solely the masses, as is often the case. Men who never before had done manual labor could now be seen following the plow, cultivating crops, operating reapers, and threshing the grain. The farm superintendents, most of them young and able-bodied men of education, had long ago been called to the colors as reserve officers, so that generally the owner, who in the past had taken it very easy, was now confronted with a total absence of executives on his estates, in addition to being short of man-power and animals of labor.

But the large farm-operators were not half so poorly off as the small farmer. I will cite a case in order to show the conditions on the small farms and in the villages.

The land near Linz in Austria is particularly fertile and is mostly held by small owners who came into possession of it during the Farmer Revolution in the 'forties. I visited a number of these men and will give here what is a typical instance of what they had to contend with in the crop season of 1915.

"It is all right for the government to expect that we are to raise the same, if not better, crops during the war," said one of them. "For the fine gentlemen who sit in the Ministerial offices that does not mean much. Out here it is different. Their circulars are very interesting, but the fact is that we cannot carry out the suggestions they make."

"They have left me my youngest son. He is

THE IRON RATION

a mere boy—just eighteen. The other boys—three of them—who helped me run this place, I have lost. One of them was killed in Galicia, and the other two have been taken prisoners. I may never see them again. They say my two boys are prisoners. But I have heard nothing of them.

“My crops would have been better if I hadn’t tried to follow some of the advice in the government circulars. It was my duty to raise all I could on my land, they said. I doubted the wisdom of putting out too much, with nobody to help me.

“It would have been better had I followed my own judgment and plowed half the land and let the other lie fallow, in which case it would have been better for the crops next year. Instead of that I planted all the fields, used a great deal of seed, wasted much of my labor, first in plowing, then in cultivating, and later in harvesting, and now I have actually less return than usually I had from half the land.”

The records of the man showed that from his thirty acres he had harvested what normally fifteen would have given him. Haste makes waste, and in his instance haste was the equivalent of trying to do with two pairs of weak hands what formerly three pairs of strong arms had done. The farmer explained that for several years before the war he had done little work, feeling that he was entitled to a rest.

Nor had his heart been in the work. One of his sons had been killed. Two others were in



Photograph from Brown Brothers, N. Y.

A LEVY OF FARMER BOYS OFF FOR THE BARRACKS

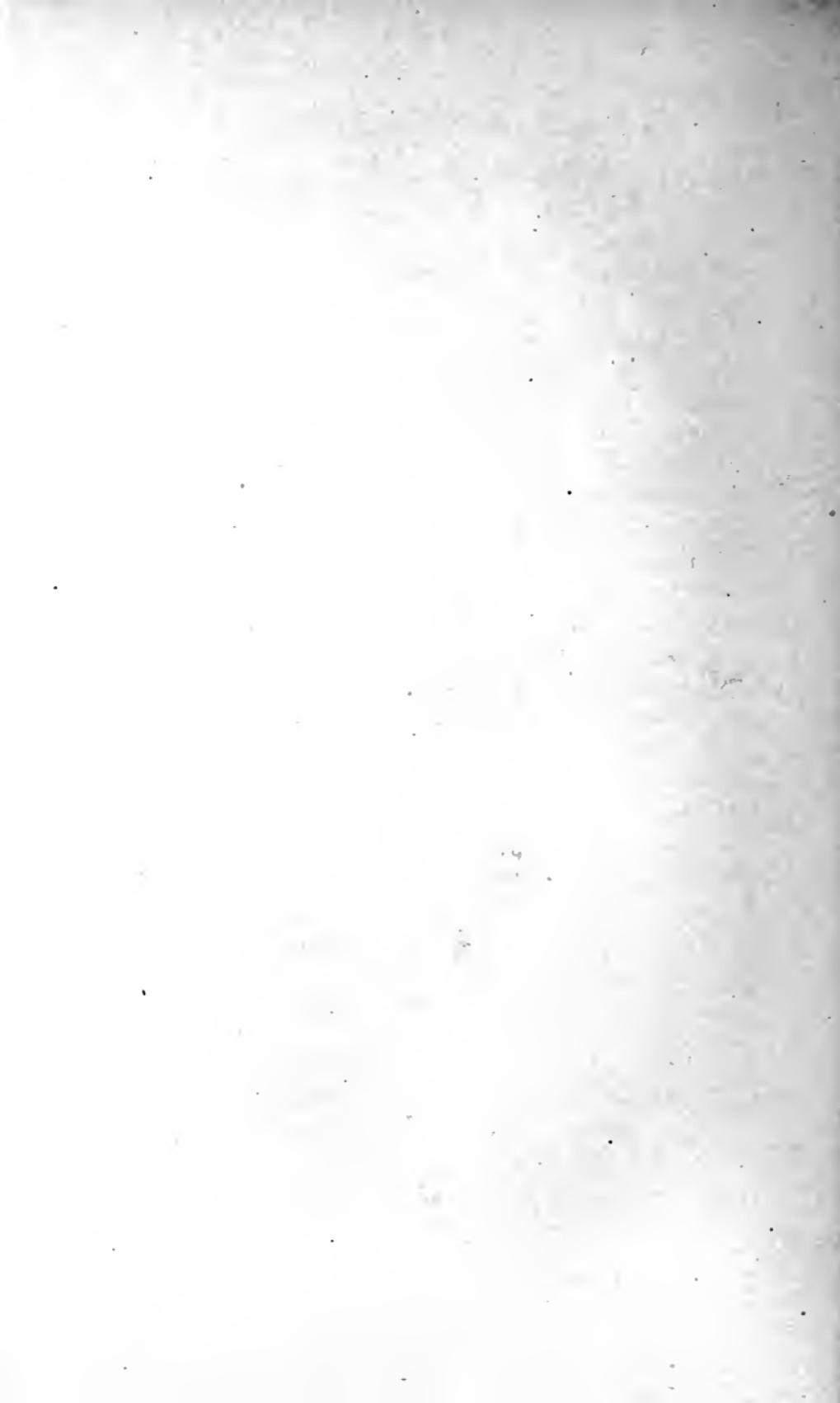
The fact that millions of food-producers of this type were taken from the soil caused Central Europe to run short of life's necessities.



Photograph from Brown Brothers, N. Y.

GERMAN CAVALRYMEN AT WORK PLOWING

As food grew scarcer the German army began to cultivate the fields in the occupied territories to lessen the burden of the food-producer at home.



FAMINE COMES TO STAY

captivity, and the fourth, Franz, might be called to the colors any day. It seemed to him futile to continue. What was the use of anything, now that his family had been torn apart in that manner?

Taxes were higher, of course. On the other hand, he was getting a little more for his products, but not enough to make good the loss sustained through bad crops. While the production of his land had fallen to about one-half of normal, he was getting on an average 15 per cent. more for what he sold, which was now a bare third of what he had sold in other years, seeing that from the little he had raised he had to meet the wants of his family and the few animals that were left.

Neighbors of the man told a similar story. Some of them had done a little better in production, but in no instance had the crop been within more than 80 per cent. of normal. They, too, were not satisfied with the prices they were getting. The buyers of the commission-men were guided by the minimum-price regulation which the government was enforcing, and often they would class a thing inferior in order to go below that price—as the regulations permitted. These people felt that they were being mulcted. But redress there was none. If they refused to sell, the authorities could compel them, and rather than face requisition they allowed the agents of the food sharks to have their way. The thought that the government was exploiting them was disheartening, and was reflected in their production of food.

THE IRON RATION

This was the state of affairs almost everywhere. The able-bodied men had been taken from the soil, just as they had been taken from other economic spheres. Labor was not only scarce, but so high-priced that the small farmer could not afford to buy it.

And then, I found that in the rural districts the war looked much more real to people. There it had truly fostered the thought that all in life is vain. The city people were much better off in that respect. They also had their men at the front. But they had more diversion, even if that diversion was usually no more than meeting many people each day. They had, moreover, the exhilarating sensation that comes from playing a game for big stakes. When the outlook was dreary they always found some optimist who would cheer them up; and the report of some victory, however small and inconsequential, buoyed them up for days at a time. Out in the country it was different. The weekly paper did its best to be cheerful. But its sanguine guesses as to the military future were seen by eyes accustomed to dealing with the realities of nature.

I visited many Austrian villages and found the same psychology everywhere. The Austrian farmer was tired of the war by December of 1914. When I occupied myself again with him a year later he was disgusted and had come to care not a rap who governed in Budapest. Of course, it was different should the Russians get to Vienna. In that case they would take their pitchforks and scythes and show them.

FAMINE COMES TO STAY

The Hungarian farmer was in the same mood. If the war could have been ended with the Italians getting no farther than Vienna things would have been well enough, but to have the Russians in Budapest—not to be thought of; not for a minute.

Meanwhile, the Austrian and Hungarian governments, taking now many a leaf from the book of the Germans, were urging a greater production of food next season. Highly technical books were being digested into the every-day language of the farmer. It was pointed out what sorts of plowing would be most useful, and what might be omitted in case it could not be done. How and when to fertilize under prevailing conditions was also explained.

The leaflets meant well, but generally overlooked the fact that each farm has problems of its own. But this prodding of the farmer and his soil was not entirely without good results. It caused a rather thorough cultivation of the fields in the fall of 1915, and also led to the utilization of fertilizing materials which had been overlooked before. The dung-pits were scraped, and even the earth around them was carted into the fields. Though animal urine had already been highly valued as a fertilizer, it was now conserved with greater care. Every speck of wood ash was saved. The humus on the woodland floors and forests was drawn on. The muck of rivers and ponds was spread over the near-by fields, and in northern Germany the parent stratum of peat growth was ground up and added to the soil as plant food.

V

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

THERE were two schools of war economists in Central Europe, and they had their following in each of the several governments that regulated food—its production, distribution, and consumption. The two elements opposed each other, naturally, and not a little confusion came of this now and then.

The military formed one of these schools—the radical. These men wanted to spread over the entire population the discipline of the barrack-yard. For the time being they wanted the entire state to be run on military principles. All production was to be for the state; all distribution was to be done in the interest of the war, and all consumption, whether that of the rich or the poor, was to be measured by the military value of the individual. It was proposed that every person in the several states should get just his share of the available food and not a crumb more. The rich man was to eat exactly, to the fraction of an ounce, what the poor man got. He was to have no greater a share of clothing, fuel, and light.

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

That seemed very equitable to most people. It appealed even to the other school, but it did not find the approval of those who were interested in the perpetuation of the old system of social economy. What the military proposed was more than the socialists had ever demanded. The enforcement of that measure would have been the triumph absolute of the Social-Democrats of Central Europe.

But for that the Central European politician and capitalist was not ready. With the capitalist it was a question of: What good would it do to win the war if socialism was thus to become supreme? It would be far better to go down in military defeat and preserve the profit system.

The struggle was most interesting. I had occasion to discuss it with a man whose name I cannot give, for the reason that it might go hard with him—and I am not making war on individuals. At any rate, the man is now a general in the German army. He was then a colonel and looked upon as the ablest combination of politician, diplomatist, and soldier Germany possessed, as he had indeed proved.

"You are a socialist," I said to him. "But you don't seem to know it."

"I am a socialist and do know it," said the colonel. "This war has made me a socialist. When this affair is over, and I am spared, I will become an active socialist."

"And the reason?" I asked.

That question the colonel did not answer.

THE IRON RATION

He could not. But I learned indirectly what his reasons were. Little by little he unfolded them to me. He was tired of the butchery, all the more tired since he could not see how bloody strife of that sort added anything to the well-being of man.

"When war reaches the proportions it has to-day it ceases to be a military exercise," he said on one occasion. "The peoples of Europe are at one another's throat to-day because one set of capitalists is afraid that it is to lose a part of its dividends to another. The only way we have of getting even with them is to turn socialist and put the curb on our masters."

There would seem to be no direct connection between this sentiment and the economic tendency of the military in food regulation. Yet there is. The men in the trenches knew very well what they were fighting for. They realized that, now the struggle was on, they had to continue with it, but they had also made up their mind to be heard from later on.

The case I have quoted is not isolated. I found another in the general headquarters of General von Stein, then commanding a sector on the Somme.

In the camp of the military economists was also that governing element which manages to drag out an existence of genteel shabbiness on the smallest pay given an official of that class anywhere. This faction also favored the most sweeping measures of war economy.

But it was in the end a simple matter of holding

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

these extremists down. Their opponents always had the very trenchant argument that it took money to carry on the war, and that this money could not be had if the old system was completely overthrown. There was little to be said after that. To do anything that would make war loans impossible would be treason, of course, and that was considered going too far.

Regulation thereafter resolved itself into an endeavor by the anti-capitalists to trim their *bête noire* as much as was possible and safe, and the effort of the economic standpatters to come to the rescue of their friends. Now the one, then the other, would carry off the honors, and each time capital and public would either gain or lose. It depended somewhat on the season. When war loans had to be made, the anti-capitalist school would ease off a little, and when the loan had been subscribed it would return to its old tactics, to meet, as before, the very effective passive resistance of the standpatters.

I may mention here that much of what has been said of the efficient organization of the German governments is buncombe—rot pure and simple. In the case of the Austrian and Hungarian governments this claim has never been made, could never have been made, and no remark of mine is necessary. The thing that has been mistaken for efficient organization is the absolute obedience to authority which has been bred into the German for centuries. Nor is that obedience entirely barrack bred, as some have asserted. It is more the high regard for munici-

THE IRON RATION

pal law and love of orderliness than the fear of the drill-sergeant that finds expression in this obedience. How to make good use of this quality requires organizing ability, of course. But no matter how the efficient organization of the Germans is viewed, the fact remains that the German people, by virtue of its love of orderliness, is highly susceptible to the impulses of the governing class. To that all German efficiency is due.

There had been some modification of distribution early in 1915. That, however, was entirely a military measure. The traffic on the German state railroads was unusually heavy, and trackage, rolling-stock, and motive power had to be husbanded if a breakdown of the long lines of communication between the French and Russian fronts was to be avoided. There was no thought of social economy. The thing aimed at was to keep the railroads fit for military service.

But by August of 1915 the military economists had managed to get their hands into economic affairs. It cannot be said that their efforts were at first particularly fortunate. But the German general staff was and is composed of men quick to learn. These men had then acquired at least one sound notion, and this was that, with the railroads of the several states under military control, they could "get after" the industrial and commercial barons whom they hated so cordially.

"In the interest of the military establishment" a number of socio-economic innovations were

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

introduced. The first of them was the distribution zone. There is no doubt that it was a clever idea. It was so sound, at the same time, that the friends of the trade lords in the government had to accept it.

The arrangement worked something like this. A wholesaler of flour in western Hanover might have a good customer in the city of Magdeburg. Up to now he had been permitted to ship to that customer as he desired. That was to cease. He could now ship only to that point when he could prove that the flour was not needed nearer to where it was stored. But to prove that was not easy—was impossible, in fact.

Since the German state railroads had in the past provided much of the revenue of the several governments, this was no small step to take. But it was taken, and with most salutary effects. The trundling of freight back and forth ceased, and the food shark was the loser.

Ostensibly, this had been done in order to conserve the railroads. Its actual purpose was to check the trade lords by depriving them of one of their arguments why the price of necessities should be high.

What was accomplished in this instance should interest any community, and for that reason I will illustrate it with an example of “economic waste” found in the United States.

You may have eaten a “Kansas City” steak in San Antonio, Texas, if not at Corpus Christi or Brownsville. (I am an adopted “native” of that region and inordinately proud of it.) If

THE IRON RATION

you had investigated the history of that steak I think you would have been somewhat surprised. The steer which produced that steak might have been raised in the valley of the Rio Grande. After that the animal had taken a trip to Oklahoma, where better pasture put more meat on its back. Still later a farmer in Missouri had fattened the steer on the very cream of his soil, and after that it had been taken to Kansas City or Chicago to be butchered and "storaged."

It might then have dawned upon you that a great deal of wasted effort was hidden in the price of that steak, though no more than in the biscuit that was wheat in North Dakota, flour in Minneapolis, biscuit in San Francisco, and a toothsome morsel to follow the steak. You would be a dull person indeed if now some economic short cut had not occurred to you. The steak might have been produced by Texas grass and North Texas corn, and the like, and it need never have traveled farther than San Antonio. The biscuit might have been given its form in Minneapolis.

It was so in Germany before the military social economists took a hand in the scheme, though the waste was by no means as great as in the cases I have cited, seeing that all of the empire is a little smaller than the Lone Star State.

But the little trundling there was had to go.

In the winter of 1915-16 this budding economic idea was still in chrysalis, however. The several governments still looked upon it entirely as a measure for the conservation of their railroads.

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

What is more, they were afraid to give the principle too wide an application. In the first place, the extension of the scheme into the socio-economic structure seemed difficult technically. It was realized that the reduction of traffic on the rails was one thing, and that the simplifying of distribution was quite another. To effect the first the Minister of Railroads had merely to get in touch with the chiefs of the "direction," as the districts of railroading are called. The chiefs would forward instruction to their division heads, and after that everything was in order.

But distribution was another thing. In that case the several governments did not deal with a machine attuned to obey the slightest impulse from above, and which as readily transmitted impulses from the other end. Far from it. Not to meddle with distribution, so long as this was not absolutely necessary, was deemed the better course, especially since all such meddling would have to be done along lines drawn a thousand times by the Central European socialist.

But the food shark had to be checked somehow. The unrest due to his sharp practices was on the increase. The minimum-maximum price decrees which had been issued were all very well, but so long as there was a chance to speculate and hoard they were to the masses a detriment rather than a benefit.

Let me show you how the food shark operated. The case I quote is Austrian, but I could name hundreds of similar instances in Germany. I have selected this case because I knew the man

THE IRON RATION

by sight and attended several sessions of his trial. First I will briefly outline what law he had violated.

To lay low what was known as chain trade throughout Central Europe, *Kettenhandel*, the governments had decreed that foodstuffs could be distributed only in this manner: The producer could sell to a commission-man, but the commission-man could sell only to the wholesaler, and the wholesaler only to the retailer.

That appears rational enough. But neither commission-man nor wholesaler liked to adhere to the scheme. Despite the law, they would pass the same thing from one to another, and every temporary owner of the article would add a profit, and no small one. To establish the needed control the retailer was to demand from the wholesaler the bill of sale by which the goods had passed into his hands, while the wholesaler could make the commission-man produce documentary evidence showing how much he had paid the producer. Under the scheme a mill, or other establishment where commodities were collected, was a producer.

Mr. B. had bought of the Fiume Rice Mills Company a car-load of best rice, the car-load in Central Europe being generally ten tons. He had brought the rice to Vienna and there was an eager market for it, as may be imagined. But he wanted to make a large profit, and that was impossible if he went about the sale of the rice in the manner prescribed by the government. The wholesaler or retailer to whom he sold might

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

wish to see the bill of sale, and then he was sure to report him to the authorities if the profit were greater than the maximum which the government had provided. To overcome all this he did what many others were doing, and in that manner made on the single car of rice which he sold to a hunger-ridden community the neat little profit of thirty-five hundred crowns.

Something went wrong, however. Mr. B. was arrested and tried on the charge of price-boosting by means of chain trade. When the rice got to Vienna he had sold it to a dummy. The dummy sold it to another dummy, and Mr. B. bought it again from the second dummy. In this manner he secured the necessary figures on the bill of sale and imposed them on the wholesaler. The court was lenient in his case. He was fined five thousand crowns, was given six weeks in jail, and lost his license to trade. *Preistreiberei*—to wit—price-boosting did not pay in this instance.

After all, that sort of work was extremely crude when compared with some other specimens, though the more refined varieties of piracy needed usually the connivance of some public official, generally a man connected with the railroad management. Many of these officials were poorly paid when the war began and the government could not see its way clear to paying them more. The keen desire of keeping up the shabby gentility that goes with Central European officialdom, and very often actual want, caused these men to fall by the roadside.

There was a little case that affected three

THE IRON RATION

hundred cars of wheat flour. Though Hungary and Austria had then no wheat flour to spare for export, the flour was actually exported through Switzerland into Italy, though that country was then at war with the Dual Monarchy! Thirty-two men were arrested, and two of them committed suicide before the law laid hands on them. The odd part of it was that the flour had crossed the Austro-Hungarian border at Marchegg, where the shipment had been examined by the military border police. It had then gone across Austria as a shipment of "cement in bags," had passed as such into Switzerland, and there the agents of the food sharks in Budapest had turned it over to an Italian buyer. Nobody would have been the wiser had it not been that a shipment of some thirty cars was wrecked. Lo and behold, the cement was flour!

They had some similar cases in Germany, though most of them involved chain trading in textiles. The unmerciful application of the law did not deter the profiteer at all, any more than capital punishment has ever succeeded in totally eradicating murder. There was always somebody who would take a chance, and it was the leakage rather than the general scheme of distribution that did all the damage. Whatever necessity and commodity had once passed out of the channel of legitimate business had to stay out of it if those responsible for the deflection were not to come in conflict with the law, and there were always those who were only too glad to buy such stores. The wholesaler

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

received more than the maximum price he could have asked of the retailer, and the consumer was glad to get the merchandise at almost any price so that he could increase his hoard.

But the governments were loth to put the brake on too much of the economic machinery. They depended on that machinery for money to carry on the war, and large numbers of men would be needed to supervise a system of distribution that thwarted the middleman's greed effectively. These men were not available.

The minimum-maximum price scheme had shown itself defective, moreover. In theory this was all very well, but in food regulation it is often a question of: The government proposes and the individual disposes. The minimum price was the limit which any would-be buyer could offer the seller. In the case of the farmer it meant that for a kilogram (2.205 pounds) of potatoes he would get, let us say, five cents. Nobody could offer him less. The maximum price was to protect the consumer, who for the same potatoes was supposed to pay no more than six and one-half cents. The middlemen were to fit into this scheme as best they could. The one and one-half cents had to cover freight charges, operation cost, and profit. The margin was ample in a farm-warehouse-store-kitchen scheme of distribution. But it left nothing for the speculator, being intended to stimulate production and ease the burden which the consumer was bearing. Not the least purpose of the scheme was to keep the money out of the

THE IRON RATION

hands of food-dealers, who would hoard their ill-gotten gain. The government needed an active flow of currency.

All of which was well enough so long as the supply of food was not really short. But when it grew short another factor entered the arena. Everybody began to hoard. The quantities which the authorities released for consumption were not intended to be stored, however. Storing food by incompetents is most wasteful, as the massacre of the pigs had shown, and hoarding, moreover, gave more food to the rich than to the poor; so for the time being it could not be encouraged too openly, despite the revenues that came from it.

But the hoarder is hard to defeat. The consumer knew and trusted the retailer, the retailer was on the best of terms with the wholesaler, and the rapacious commission-man knew where to get the goods.

He made the farmer a better offer than the minimum price he usually received. He paid six cents for the kilogram of potatoes, or even seven. Then he sold in a manner which brought the potatoes to the consumer for eleven cents through the "food speak-easy." The middleman and retailer had now cleared four cents on the kilogram, instead of one and one-half cents; their outlay deducted, they would make a net profit running from two and one-half cents to three and one-half cents per 2.205 American pounds of potatoes. This sort of traffic ran into the tens of thousands of tons. The food shark was

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

making hay while the weather was good. The entire range of human alimentation was at his mercy, and often the government closed an eye because the food shark would subscribe handsomely to the next war loan.

In the winter of 1915-16 I made several trips into the country to see how things were getting along. On one occasion I was in Moravia. I had heard rumors that here the food shark had found Paradise. It was a fact. Near a freight-yard in Brünn a potato-dealer was installed. He bought potatoes in any quantity, being in effect merely the agent of the Vienna Bank Ring that was doing a food-commission business as a side line. I don't know why the government permitted this, except that this "*concession*" was a *quid pro quo* for war-loan subscriptions.

A little old Czech farmer drove up. He had some thirty bags of potatoes on his sleigh, all well protected by straw and blankets. The food shark looked the load over and offered the minimum price for that grade, which on that day was eighteen hellers the kilogram, about one and three-fourths cents American per pound avoirdupois.

The farmer protested. "My daughter in Vienna tells me that she has to pay thirty-six hellers a kilogram," he said.

"Not according to the maximum price set by the government, which is twenty-one hellers just now," was the bland remark of the agent.

"That is all very well, sir!" returned the farmer. "But you know as well as I do that

THE IRON RATION

when my daughter wants potatoes she must pay thirty-six hellers or whatever the retailer wants. She writes me that when she stands in the food-line she never gets anything. So she does business with a man who always has potatoes."

The food shark had no time to lose. Other farmers came.

"Eighteen hellers or nothing," he said.

The farmer thought it over for a while and then sold.

The reader uninitiated in war-food conditions may ask: Why didn't that farmer ship his daughter the potatoes she needed? He couldn't, of course. The economic-zone arrangement prevented him. That zone was the means which the government employed to regulate and restrict distribution and consumption without giving money an opportunity to tarnish in the hands of people who might not subscribe to war loans. The zone "mobilized" the pennies by concentrating them in the banks and making them available *en masse* for the war.

Yet the fact was that the daughter of the farmer, buying potatoes clandestinely, may have bought the very product of her father's land. Who in that case got the eighteen hellers difference? The middlemen, of course. That the poor woman, in order to feed her children, might have been able to use to good advantage two kilograms at thirty-six hellers, instead of one, is very likely, but this consideration did not bother the food sharks known as the Vienna Bank Ring.

On one occasion the same group of food specu-

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

lators permitted two million eggs to spoil in a railroad yard at Vienna because the price was not good enough. The Bank Ring was just then agitating for a better price for eggs and hoped that the maximum would be raised. But the government was a little slow on this occasion, and before the price went up, "according to regulation," the eggs were an unpleasant memory to the yard-hands. Naturally, nobody was prosecuted in this case. I understood at the time that the Bank Ring presented to the Austrian government a sort of ultimatum, which read: "No profits, no war loans." The government surrendered.

The fact that many of these speculators were of the Jewish persuasion caused a revival of a rather mild sort of anti-Semitism. Several of the Christian newspapers made much of this, but the government censors soon put an end to that. This was no time for the pot to call the kettle black. The food shark came from all classes, and the Austrian nobility was not poorly represented.

There was the case of the princely house of Schwarzenberg, for instance. The family is not of German blood to any extent, as the name would seem to imply. Nowadays it is distinctly Bohemian, and in Bohemia its vast estates and properties are located. The managers of the Schwarzenbergs had a corner on almost everything that was raised in the localities of the family's domains. In the winter of 1915-16 they forced up, to unheard-of heights, the price of

THE IRON RATION

prunes. The prune was a veritable titbit then, and with most people in Central Europe it had come to be the only fruit they could get in the winter. Its nutritive value is great, and since every pfennig and heller had to buy a maximum in food values the demand for prunes soon exceeded greatly the supply—so everybody thought.

But the trouble was not a shortage. The crop had been good, in fact. Orchards, so far as they had not been harmed by the paucity of copper for the manufacture of vitriol and Bordeaux mixture for the extermination of tree parasites, had not suffered by the war. The trees bore as usual, and fruit crops were generally what they had been before. Nor had there been an increase in operation expenses, aside from what little extra pay there was given those who gathered the crop.

But the Schwarzenbergs and a few others made up their minds that they, too, would get a little of the war profits. They also were heavy investors in war loans.

So long as this corner was confined to prunes and other fruits the thing presented no great problem—as problems went then. But the activity of this particular ring did not stop there. Its members dealt in everything the soil produced.

During the first months of the war there had been set aside by the several military authorities certain agricultural districts from which the armies were to be supplied with food, forage,

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

and the like. The idea was not a bad one. The armies were voracious consumers, and a scheme which would concentrate over as small an area as possible the supplies needed meant a great saving of time and effort when shipments had to be made.

That would have been very well had the several governments bought all supplies from the producer direct through the medium of a purchasing branch of the commissary department. Such was not the case, however. The government continued to buy through war purveyors, who had, indeed, been curbed a little, but only in exchange for other privileges. Standing in well with the military, these men were able to sell out of the commissary-supply zones what the armies did not need—poultry, butter, fats, and eggs, for instance. These little side lines paid very well. I remember discovering on one trip that near Prague could be bought a whole goose for what in Vienna two pounds would cost. Since the Bohemian geese are never small birds, and weigh from nine to twelve pounds, this was a case of five to one. When in the cities butter was almost a thing unknown, I was able to buy in Bohemia any quantity at the very reasonable price of twenty-seven cents American a pound. In Vienna it cost one dollar and thirty cents a pound after the food shark had been satisfied.

The military-supply-zone arrangement made exports from districts affected to the large population centers impossible, except upon spe-

THE IRON RATION

cial permit, which was not easy to get by the man who had no "protection," as they put it in Austria. The food shark always interfered. In doing that he had a sort of double objective. Scarcity was forcing up the prices in the cities, and when the government had been persuaded that the prevailing maximum price was not "fair to the farmer" the shark had a reservoir to draw upon.

I found a similar state of affairs in Galicia. On the very outskirts of Cracow I ran into a veritable land of plenty. The military zone had completely isolated this district, and while elsewhere people had not seen butter in weeks, it was used here for cooking, and lard served as axle-grease. Finally the zone was opened to the civilian consumer. But this concession benefitted only the food sharks. In the population centers prices remained what they had been.

I found similar conditions in Germany, though the cause was not entirely the same.

The Mecklenburg states still have a government and public administration scheme that has come down to our day from the Middle Ages without much modification. They have no constitution as yet, and they would have no railroads, I suppose, were it not that their neighbors had to get access to one another through these principalities. The two countries are hard-boiled eggs indeed. And the Mecklenburgers are like their government. I understand that some enlightened ruler once offered his people constitutional government, but had a refusal for his pains.

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

Enough food had been hoarded in Mecklenburg to meet all Germany's shortage three months. But nobody could get it out. The Imperial German government had no say in the matter. The several German states are as jealous of their vested rights as any American State could possibly be. And the Mecklenburg government had little influence with its farmers. The case was rather interesting. Here was an absolute government that was more impotent in its dealings with its subjects than constitutional Austria was. But the Mecklenburg farmers were of one mind, and that quality is often stronger than a regularly established constitution—it is stronger for the reason that it may be an unwritten constitution.

The cellars and granaries of Mecklenburg were full to overflowing. But there the thing ended, until one day the screws were put on by the Imperial German government. The Mecklenburgers had been good war-loan buyers, however. Hard-headed farmers often prefer direct methods.

In Westphalia they had similar food islands, and from Osnabrück to the North Sea victuals had generally to be pried loose with a crowbar. There the farmer was the peasant of the good old type; he was generally a hard person to deal with. It was shown that while he did not mind being classed as low-caste—*Bauernstand*—he also had cultivated a castal independence. He would doff his cap to the government official, and all the time resolve the firmer not to let

THE IRON RATION

his crops get out of his hands in a manner not agreeable to him.

Passive resistance is too much for any government, no matter how absolute and strong it may be. It can be overcome only by cajolery.

The clandestine food-buyer had better luck, of course. He knew how to impress and persuade the thickhead, and then made the dear general public pay for this social accomplishment, which may be as it should be. He also frustrated the plan of the government. Pennies so mobilized did not always go into war loans.

To the men in high places this was not unknown, of course. They realized that something would have to be done soon or late to put this department of war economics on a smooth track. Appeals not to hoard and not to speculate in the interest of the nation were all very well, but they led to nothing.

Still, it would not do to undertake the major operation on the vitals of the socio-economic organism which alone could set matters right. More doctoring was done during the summer of 1916. Those who did it were being misled by the will-o'-the-wisp of a good crop prospect.

In August of that year I had an interview with Dr. Karl Helfferich, the first German food-dictator. He was averse just then to more food regulation. He had done wonders as it was. Everybody knew that, though he was most modest about it. More regulation of the economic machine seemed undesirable to him. He did not want to wholly unmake and remodel the in-

THE FOOD SHARK AND HIS WAYS

dustrial and commercial organism of the state, and preliminary crop reports were such that further interference seemed unnecessary at that moment.

As it was, the rye crop of Germany met expectations. Wheat fell short, however, Oats were good, but the potatoes made a poor showing, as did a number of other crops that year.

Crop returns in Austria were disappointing on the whole. The spring had been very wet and the summer unusually dry. When the harvesting season came a long rainy spell ruined another 10 per cent. of the cereals. Potatoes failed to give a good yield. In Hungary the outlook was equally discouraging, and reports from the occupied territories in Poland, Serbia, and Macedonia showed that what the "economic troops" and occupation forces had raised would be needed by the armies.

To fill the cup of anxiety to the brim, Roumania declared war. The several governments had made arrangements to give furlough to as many farm-workers as possible, that the crops might be brought in properly. The entry of Roumania into the war made that impossible. And the moment for entry had been chosen well indeed. By reason of its warmer climate, Roumania had been able to harvest a good three-quarters of her crops by August, and the Indian corn could be left to the older men, women, and children to gather. But in the Central states it was different. Much of the wheat had been harvested, and some rye had also been

THE IRON RATION

brought in, but the bulk of the field produce, upon which the populations depended for their nourishment, was still in the fields.

I have never experienced so gloomy a time as this. There was a new enemy, and this enemy was spreading all over Transylvania. The shortage of labor was greater than ever before, with the weather more unfavorable.

What the conditions in Austria and Hungary were at that time I was able to ascertain on several trips to the Roumanian front. Cereals that should have been under roof long ago were standing in the fields, spilling their kernels when rain was not rotting them. Those who were left to reap struggled heroically with the huge task on their hands, but were not equal to it. If ever the specter of famine had stalked through the Central states, those were the days.

All this left the food shark undisturbed. He laid hands on all he could and was ready to squeeze hard when the time came.

VI

THE HOARDERS

THE fact that business relations in Central Europe are very often family and friendship affairs was to prove an almost insuperable obstacle in government food regulation. It led to the growth of what for the want of a better term I will call: The food "speak-easy."

The word *Kundschaft* may be translated into English as "circle of customers." The term "trade" will not fit, for the reason that relations between old customers and storekeeper are usually the most intimate. The dealer may have known the mother of the woman who buys in his shop. He may have also known her grandmother. At any rate, it is certain that the customer has dealt at the store ever since she moved into the district. Loyalty in Central Europe goes so far that a customer would think twice before changing stores, and if a change is made it becomes almost a matter of personal affront. The storekeeper will feel that he has done his best by the customer and has found no appreciation.

Not versed in the ways of Europe, I had several experiences of this peculiarity.

THE IRON RATION

While in Vienna I used to buy my smoking materials of a little woman who kept a tobacco "*Traffic*" on the Alleestrasse. I did not show up when at the front, of course, and, making many such trips, my custom was a rather spasmodic affair. The woman seemed to be worried about it.

"It is very odd, sir, that you stay away altogether at times," she said. "Is it possible that you are not satisfied with my goods? They are the same as those you get elsewhere, you know."

That was true enough. In Austria trade in tobacco is a government monopoly, and one buys the same brands at all the stores.

"I am not always in town," I explained.

I was to get my bringing-up supplemented presently. Those who know the Viennese will best understand what happened.

"You are a foreigner, sir," continued the woman, "and cannot be expected to know the ways of this country. May I give you a little advice?"

I said that I had never been above taking advice from anybody.

"You will get much better service from storekeepers in this country if you become a regular customer, and especially in these days. You see, that is the rule here. Smoking material, as you know, is already short, and I fear that in a little while there will not be enough to go around."

The tip was not lost on me, especially since I found that the woman really meant well. She had counted on me as one of those whom she

THE HOARDERS

intended to supply with smokes when the shortage became chronic, which it soon would be. And that she proposed doing because I was such a "pleasant fellow." After that I took pains to announce my departure whenever I had occasion to leave the city, and I found that, long after the "tobacco-line" was one of the facts of the time, the woman would lay aside for me every day ten cigarettes. My small trade had come to be one of the things which the woman counted upon—and she wanted no fickleness from me in return for the thought she gave my welfare.

What a food shortage would lead to under such conditions can be imagined. The storekeeper would look out for his regular customers, before any other person got from him so much as sight of the food.

The government regulations were less partial, however. The several food cards, with which would-be purchasers were provided, were intended to be honored on sight so long as the quota they stipulated was there.

The food "speak-easy" had its birth in this. The storekeeper would know that such and such customer needed sundry items and would reserve them. The customer might never get them if she stood in line, so she called afterward at the back door, or came late of nights when the sign "Everything Sold" hung in the window.

Had this illicit traffic stopped there and then things would have been well enough. But it did not. Before very long it degenerated into a wild scramble for food for hoarding purposes.

THE IRON RATION

As yet the several governments were not greatly interested in distribution methods that really were of service. The avenue from wholesaler to retailer was still open. The food cards were issued to the public to limit consumption, and the law paragraph quoted on them called attention to the fact that infraction of the regulations would be punished no matter by whom committed.

Most of the little coupons were half the size of a postage stamp, and so many of them were collected by a storekeeper in the course of a week that an army of men would have been needed if the things were to be counted. So the governments took a chance with the honesty of the retailers. That was a mistake, of course, but it was the only way.

There was at first no control of any sort over the quantities bought by the retailer. In fact, he could buy as much as he liked so long as the wholesaler did not have another friend retailer to keep in mind. The other retailer was doing business along the same lines, and could not be overlooked; otherwise there would be the danger of losing him as soon as the war was over; in those days it was still "soon."

The wholesaler maintained the best of relations with the retailer, despite the fact that he was of a superior class. The two would meet now and then in the cafés, and there the somewhat unequal business friendship would be fostered over the marble-topped table.

The customer of the retailer was already



Copyright by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

STREET SCENE AT EISENACH, SOUTHERN GERMANY

From the villages and small towns is recruited sixty per cent. of the German army.



THE HOARDERS

hoarding food. The retailer tried to do all the business he could, of course, and in the pursuit of this policy bought from the wholesaler all he could possibly get for money or love.

Commission-men were licensed by the government, and when food regulation became a little more stringent they were obliged to make some sort of a slovenly report on the quantities they handled. But the government food commissions did not have the necessary personnel to keep close tally of these reports. This led to partial returns by the middlemen, a practice which entailed no particular risk so long as the government did not actually control and direct the buying of foodstuffs in the country and at the mills.

Business moved smartly as the result of this combination of circumstances. The wholesaler bought twice as much from the commission-man, and the latter had to buy, accordingly, in the country.

The maximum prices which the government set upon foods about to enter into possession of the consumer were invariably accompanied by minimum prices which the producer was to get. Reversely, the arrangement meant that the customer could not offer less for food than the government had decided he should pay, nor could the farmer or other producer demand more.

That was well enough in a way. The farmer was to get for a kilogram (2.205 pounds) of wheat not less than four and one-half cents, and the middleman selling to the mill could not ask

THE IRON RATION

more than five and one-half cents. Labor and loss in milling taken into consideration, the mill was to be satisfied with seven cents, while the consumer, so said the regulations, was to get his flour for eight and one-quarter cents per kilogram.

That was all very well, but it came to mean little in the end.

The customer thought he would lay in two hundred pounds of wheat flour for the rainy day. The retailer could not see it in that way. That was just a little too much. There were other worthy customers who might have to go short of their regular quota if he sold in amounts of that size. But the customer wanted the flour and was willing to pay more than the regulation or maximum price for it. It took but little tempting to cause the fall of the retailer.

The wholesaler would do the same thing. The commission-man was willing, since part of, let us say, a 20-per-cent. increase was being handed along the line. The mill got a few crowns more per hundred kilograms, and a little of the extra price would get as far as the farmer.

That *l'appétit vient en mangeant* is a notorious fact. A dangerous practice had been launched, nor was it always inaugurated by the consumer. No class of dealers was averse to doing business that might be illicit, but which brought large profits.

A first result was that the farmer was spoiled, as the consumer and the government looked at it. While purchases from the farmer were

THE HOARDERS

bounded in price by a minimum, there was no prohibition of paying him as much more as he would take. The government's duty was to stimulate production, and that was the purpose of the minimum price.

The government, learning that a certain farmer had been getting six cents for his wheat, might wonder how much the consumer paid and get after the middlemen, but it could not hold the farmer responsible.

As a matter of fact, the government hardly ever heard of such transactions. They did not talk at the gate of the food "speak-easy." When questioned the farmer would always protest that he had all he could do to get the minimum price.

Not only was the first excess in price passed along, but large profits attached themselves to the article as it progressed cityward. The commission-men got theirs, the miller did not overlook himself, the wholesaler was remembered, naturally, and the retailer, as factotum-general in the scheme, saw to it that he was not deprived of his share.

As is always the case, the consumer paid the several pipers. And the special consumer to whom the food, thus illicitly diverted from the regular channels, meant the assurance that he would not starve although others might, paid cheerfully. What was the good of having money in the bank when soon it might not buy anything?

The lines in front of the food-shops lengthened, and many retailers acquired the habit of

THE IRON RATION

keeping open but part of the day. But even that part was usually too long. When the card in the window said, "Open from 8 to 12," it usually meant that at nine o'clock there would not be a morsel of food on the counters and shelves. The members of the food-line who had not managed to gain access to the store by that time would get no food that day.

At first the retailer would regret this very much. But he soon began to feel his oats. Women, who had stood in line for several hours, wanted to know why he had so small a quantity on hand. The man would often become abusive and refuse an explanation.

Now and then some resolute woman would complain to the police. The retailer was arrested and fined. But the woman would never again get any food from him. That was his way of getting even and disciplining the good customers upon whom at other times he had waited hand and foot.

The fine relations between customer and retailer of yore were gone by the board. The era of hoarding and greed was on. The good-natured Vienna and Berlin *Kleinkrämer* grew more autocratic every time he opened his store. People had to come to him or go hungry, and it was ever hurtful to put the beggar on horseback.

Occasional visits to the lower courts proved very interesting and entertaining, though the story that was told was always the same. The retailer had lost his sense of proportions com-

THE HOARDERS

pletely. No sergeant of an awkward squad ever developed so fine a flow of sarcastic billingsgate as did the butchers, bakers, and candlestick-makers of the Central states in those days. Almost every case had its low-comedy feature, and often I came away with the impression that the sense of humor in some people is hard to kill, especially when some serious judge pronounced the maximum sentence for an offense about whose quaint rascality he was still chuckling.

But the dear public was not as stupid as the retailers and their ilk thought. Almost everybody had a relative, friend, or acquaintance in the country, and when this was not the case one had a city friend who had such a country connection.

Sunday excursions into the country became very popular, and week-days could not be put to better use. The many holidays called for by religious observance, and now and then a victory over the enemy, came to be a severe strain upon the country's food reserve. The trains coming into the city often carried more weight in food than in passengers.

After all, that was the best way of laying in supplies. Why go to the retailer and stand in line when the farmers were willing to sell to the consumer direct?

A high tide in hoarding set in. Everybody filled garret and cellar with the things which the farm produces. Flour was stowed away in all possible and impossible places. Potatoes were

THE IRON RATION

accumulated. Butter and eggs were salted away, and so much fruit was preserved that sugar ceased to be obtainable in countries which had formerly exported much of it.

The authorities knew full well what would happen if the private route from farm to kitchen direct was not made impossible. Existing regulations already permitted the searching of trains. When the inspectors descended upon the hoarding holidayers there was much surprise, gnashing of teeth, and grumbling. But that did not help. The food illicitly brought in was confiscated, and the slightest resistance on the part of those having it in their possession brought a liberal fine and often a day or two in jail.

The parcel post was used next by the private food-hoarders. The government wanted to be easy on the population and had for this reason closed its eyes to the packages of butter and other concentrated foods that went through the mails. But the good consumers overreached themselves. The result was that the postal authorities turned over all food found in the mails to the Food Commissions and Centrals.

Next thing was that the farmer who came to market had to be curbed. That worthy man would enter town or city with a good load of eatables. By the time he had gone a few blocks he had disposed of everything. It was like taking up a drop of ink with a blotter.

The first measures against this resulted in smuggling. Every load of produce that came into a population center had in it packages of

THE HOARDERS

other good things, especially butter and lard, and later eggs, when these fell within the scope of regulation.

But the hoarding that was going on would have to be stopped if the food-supply was to last. Those who hoarded lost no chance to buy for their current consumption in the legal market, drawing thus doubly on the scant food-supplies. The authorities began to exercise their right of search. The food-inspector became an unwelcome visitor of households.

The practice of hoarding was well enough for the well-to-do. But it left the poor entirely unprovided. The average wage-earner did not have the means to buy food at the fancy prices that governed the illicit food market, and the food that went to the hoarder cut short the general supply upon which the poor depended for their daily allowance. It was quite the regular thing for the wife of a poor man to stand in line three hours and then be turned away. The retailer would still have food in the cellar, but that was to go out by private delivery. The food cards held by the women were no warrant on the quantities they prescribed, but merely the authorization to draw so and so much if the things were to be had. The woman had to take the retailer's word for it. When that august person said, "Sold out," there was nothing to do but go home and pacify the hungry children with whatever else the depleted larder contained.

Meanwhile much food was spoiling in the cellars and attics of the hoarders. People who

THE IRON RATION

never before in their lives had attempted to preserve food were now trying their hand at it—with unfortunate and malodorous results.

An acquaintance of mine in Vienna had hoarded diligently and amply. The man had on hand wheat flour, large quantities of potatoes, butter in salt, and eggs in lime-water, and conserved fruits and vegetables which represented an excess consumption in sugar. He had also laid in great quantities of honey, coffee, and other groceries. There was food enough to last his family two years, so long as a little could be had in the legal market each day.

Though the store on hand was ample, the man continued to buy where and whenever he could. One day he shipped from Agram several mattresses—not for the sake of the comfort they would bring of nights, but for the macaroni he had stuffed them with. I think that of all the hoarders he was the king-pin.

The man had three growing boys, however, and allowance has to be made for that. He did not want those boys to be stunted in their growth by insufficient nourishment. Obliged to choose between paternal and civic duty, he decided in favor of the former, for which we need not blame him too much, seeing that most of us would do precisely that thing in his position. But to understand that fully, one must have seen hungry children tormenting their parents for food. Description is wholly inadequate in such cases.

That there were others who had growing children may have occurred to the man, but meant

THE HOARDERS

nothing to him. So he continued to buy and hoard.

The storage methods employed were wrong, of course, and facilities were very limited. The potatoes froze in the cellar and sprouted in the warm rooms. Weevils took birth in the flour, because it was stored in a wardrobe only some four feet away from a stove. The canned goods stood on every shelf in the place, littered the floors and filled the corners. Faulty preserving methods or the constant changes of temperature caused most of them to ferment and spoil. Every now and then something about the apartment would explode. The man had bought up almost the last of olive-oil that could be had in Central Europe. That, too, turned rancid.

As I remember it now, he told me that of all the food he had bought—that he had hoarded it he never admitted—he had been able to use about one-third, and the annoyance he had from the spoiled two-thirds killed all the joy there was in having saved one-third. Hoarding in this case was an utter failure.

So it was in most cases. To preserve food is almost a science, and suitable storage facilities play an important rôle in this. The private hoarder had no proper facilities. That it was unlawful to hoard food caused him to go ahead storing without asking advice of people familiar with the requirements; and the possibility that agents of the food authorities might come to inspect the quarters of the hoarder made hiding imperative. Often the servants would become

THE IRON RATION

informers, so that the food had to be hidden from them in barrels, trunks, and locked chests. The result of this can be easily imagined. There was a time when more food was spoiled in Central Europe by hoarding than there was consumed. The thing was extremely short-sighted, but everybody was taking care of himself and his own.

There was no reason why food should spoil on the hands of the retailer. He never had enough to go around. But it was different with the wholesaler. This class was eternally holding back supplies for the purpose of inducing the government to increase the maximum prices. As time went on, the authorities had to do that, and the quantities then held in the warehouses benefited. The agitation of the producers for better minimum prices was water on the mill of the wholesaler. The government was eternally solicitous for the welfare of the farmer, and lent a ready ear to what he had to say. The minimum price was raised, and with it the consumer's maximum price had to go up. All quantities then held by the wholesalers were affected only by the increase in food prices that was borne by the consumer, not the increase that had to be given the farmer. It was the finest of business, especially since an increase of 5 per cent. in legitimate business meant an increase of another 15 per cent. in illicit traffic.

In the spring of 1916 I made a canvass of the situation, and found that while the farmers were getting for their products from 10 to 15 per cent.

THE HOARDERS

more than they had received in 1914, food in the cities and towns was from 80 to 150 per cent. higher than it had been normally during five years before the war. I found that the dealers and middlemen were reaping an extra profit of approximately 80 per cent. on the things they bought and sold, after the greater cost of operation had been deducted. Small wonder that jewelers in Berlin and Vienna told me that the Christmas trade of 1915 was the best they had ever done. These good people opined that their increase in business was due to the general war prosperity. They were right, but forgot to mention that this prosperity was based on the cents wrung from the starving population by the buyers of the diamonds and precious baubles.

Naturally, the dear farmer was not being left just then. He sold when he pleased for a time —until the government took a hand in moving his crops. But this interference with the affairs of the farmer was not entirely a blessing by any means. The brave tiller of the soil began to hoard now. Little actual loss came from this. The farmer knew his business. No food spoiled so long as he took care of it. All would have been well had it not been that the farmer was the very fountainhead of the hoarding which in the cities resulted in the loss of foodstuffs.

There were still many loose ends in the scheme of food regulation. While the farmer was obliged to sell to the middleman, under supervision of the government Food Centrals, all cereals and potatoes which he would not need for his own use

THE IRON RATION

and seeding, the estimates made by the Food Central agents were generally very conservative. This they had to be if the government was not to run the risk of finding itself short after fixing the ration that seemed permissible by the crop returns established in this manner. The farmer got the benefit of the doubt, of course, and that benefit he invariably salted away for illicit trading.

But illicit trading in breadstuffs was becoming more and more difficult. The grain had to go into a mill before it was flour. The government began to check up closely on the millers, which was rather awkward for all concerned in the traffic of the food "speak-easy."

A way out was found by the farmers. They were a rather inventive lot. I am sure that these men, as they followed the plow back and forth, cudgeled their brains how the latest government regulation could be met and frustrated.

Butter and fat were very short and were almost worth their weight in silver. They sold in the regulated market at from one dollar and sixty to one dollar and eighty cents a pound, and in the food "speak-easy" they cost just double that.

Why not produce more butter? thought the farmer. He had the cows. And why not more lard? He had the pigs. A bushel of grain sold at minimum price brought so much, while converted into butter and lard it was worth thrice that much. Grain was hard to sell surreptitiously, but it was easy to dispose of the fats.

THE HOARDERS

In this manner hoarding took on a new shape—one that was to lead to more waste.

None of the Central European governments had reason to believe that its food measures were popular. Much passive resistance was met. The consumer thought of himself in a hundred different ways. To curb him, the secret service of the police was instructed to keep its eyes on the family larder. Under the "War" paragraphs of the constitutions the several governments of Central Europe had that power. In Austria it was the famous "§14," for instance, under which any and all war measures were possible.

Government by inspection is not only oppressive; it is also very expensive. It is dangerous in times when authorities are face to face with unrest; at any time it is the least desirable thing there is. It was not long before both government and public discovered that. To inspect households systematically was impossible, of course. The informer had to be relied upon. Usually, discharged servants wrote anonymous letters to the police, and often it was found that this was no more than a bit of spite work. If a servant-girl wanted to give a former mistress a disagreeable surprise she would write such a letter. Some hoards were really uncovered in that manner, but the game was not worth the candle.

To get at the men who were hoarding *en masse* for speculation and price-boosting purposes, an efficient secret service was needed. But this the Central European governments do not possess.

THE IRON RATION

The police of Germany and Austria-Hungary plays an important part in the life of man. But it does this openly. The methods employed are bureaucratic routine. The helmet shows conspicuously. Wits have no place in the system.

One cannot move from one house to another without being made the subject of an entry on the police records. To move from one town to another was quite an undertaking during the war. Several documents were required. A servant or employee may not change jobs without notifying the police authorities. All life is minutely regulated and recorded on the books of the minions of the law.

In matters of that sort the Central European police is truly efficient, because the system employed has been perfected by the cumulative effort and experience of generations. Detective work, on the other hand, is out of the reach of these organizations. The German detective is as poor a performer and as awkward as certain German diplomatists. He is always found out.

Why the German and Austro-Hungarian detective services did not succeed in finding the commercial hoards I can readily understand. One could recognize the members of the services a mile off, as it were. It seemed to me that they were forever afraid of being detected. In the detective that is a bad handicap. Now and then the German detective could be heard.

As a foreigner I received considerable attention from the German, Austrian, and Hungarian police forces in the course of three years. My

THE HOARDERS

case was simple, however. I looked outlandish, no doubt, and since I spoke German with a foreign accent it really was not difficult to keep track of me. In the course of time, also, I became well known to thousands of people. That under these circumstances I should have known it at once when detectives were on my trail can be ascribed only to the clumsy work that was being done by the secret-service men. In Berlin I once invited a "shadow" of mine to get into my taxicab, lest I escape him. He refused and seemed offended.

But there is a classic bit of German detective work that I must give in detail, in order to show why the food speculator and his ilk were immune in spite of all the regulations made by the government.

I had been in Berlin several times when it happened. I knew many men in the Foreign Office, and in the bureaus of the German general staff, while to most of the Adlon Hotel employees I was as familiar a sight as I well could be without belonging to their families.

I had come over the German-Dutch border that noon, and had been subjected to the usual frisking. There had also been a little trouble—also as usual.

The clerk at the desk in the Adlon did not know me. He was a new man. He had, however, been witness to the very effusive welcome which the *chef de réception* gave me.

That did not interest me until I came down from my room and approached the desk for the

THE IRON RATION

purpose of leaving word for a friend of mine where I could be found later.

The clerk was engaged in earnest conversation with a stockily built man of middle age. I had to wait until he would be through.

After a second or so I heard my room number mentioned—237. Then the sound of my name fell. I noticed that the clerk was fingering one of the forms on which a traveler in Central Europe inscribes his name, profession, residence, nationality, age, and what not for the information of the police.

"He is a newspaper correspondent?" asked the stocky one.

"So he says," replied the clerk.

"You are sure about that?"

"Well, that is what it says on the form."

"What sort of looking fellow is he?" inquired the stockily built man.

"Rather tall, smooth shaven, dark complexion, wears eye-glasses," replied the clerk.

I moved around the column that marks the end of one part of the desk and the beginning of another part that runs at right angles to the first.

The clerk saw me and winked at the man to whom he had been talking. The detective was in the throes of embarrassment. He blushed.

"Can't I be of some assistance to you?" I remarked in an impersonal manner, looking from clerk to detective. "You seem to be interested in my identity. What do you wish to know?"

There was a short but highly awkward pause.

THE HOARDERS

"I am not," stammered the detective. "We were talking about somebody else."

"I beg your pardon," said I and moved off.

I have always taken it for granted that the detective was a new man in the secret service. Still, I have often wondered what sort of detective service it must be that will employ such helpless bunglers.

It may be no more than an *idée fixe* on my part, but ever since then I have taken *cum grano salis* all that has been said for and against the efficiency of the German secret service, be it municipal or international. At Bucharest there was maintained for a time, allegedly by the German foreign service, a man who was known to everybody on the Calea Victoriei as the German *Oberspion*—chief spy. The poor devil cut a most pathetic figure. All contentions to the contrary notwithstanding, I would say that secret service is not one of the *fortes* of the Germans. They really ought to leave it alone. That takes keener wits and quicker thinking on one's feet than can be associated with the German mind.

The Austrians were rather more efficient, and the same can be said of the Hungarian detective forces. In both cases the secret-service men were usually Poles, however, and that makes a difference. There is no mind quite so nimble, adaptive, or capable of simulation as that of the Pole. In this the race resembles strongly the French, hence its success in a field in which the French are justly the leaders.

For the food sharps the German detective was

THE IRON RATION

no match. He might impress a provident *Hausfrau* and move her to tears and the promise that she would never do it again. The commercial hoarder, who had a regular business besides and kept his books accordingly, was too much for these men. So long as no informer gave specific details that left no room for thinking on the part of the detective, the food shark was perfectly safe. The thousands of cases that came into the courts as time went on showed that the detectives, and inspectors of the Food Authorities, were thoroughly incorruptible. They also showed that they at least were doing no hoarding—in brains.

VII

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

SOMBER as this picture of life is, its background was nothing less than terrifyingly lurid..

For some minutes I had stood before a barn in Galicia. I was expected to go into that barn, but I did not like the idea. Some fourscore of cholera patients lay on the straw-littered earthen floor. Every hour or so one of them would die. Disease in their case had progressed so far that all hope had been abandoned. If by any chance one of the sick possessed that unusual degree of bodily and nerve vigor that would defeat the ravages of the germ, he would recover as well in the barn as in a hospital.

The brave man wishes to die alone. Those in the barn were brave men, and I did not wish to press my company upon them in the supreme hour. Still, there was the possibility that some might question my courage if I did not go into the barn. Cholera is highly contagious. But when with an army one is expected to do as the army does. If reckless exposure be a part of that, there is no help.

THE IRON RATION

I stepped into the gloom of the structure. There was snow on the ground outside. It took a minute or two before my eyes could discern things. Some light fell into the interior from the half-open door and a little square opening in the wall in the rear.

Two lines of sick men lay on the ground—heads toward the wall, feet in the aisle that was thus formed. Some of the cholera-stricken writhed in agony as the germ destroyed their vitals. Others lay exhausted from a spasm of excruciating agony. Some were in the coma preceding death. Two were delirious.

There was an army chaplain in the barn. He thought it his duty to be of as much comfort to the men as possible. His intentions were kind enough, and yet he would have done the patients a favor by leaving them to themselves.

As I reached the corner where the chaplain stood, one of the sick soldiers struggled into an upright position. Then he knelt, while the chaplain began to say some prayer. The poor wretch had much difficulty keeping upright. When the chaplain had said "Amen" he fell across the body of the sick man next to him.

The exertion and the mental excitement had done the man no good. Soon he was in a paroxysm of agony. The chaplain was meanwhile preparing another for the great journey.

The dead had been laid under one of the eaves. A warm wind had sprung up and the sun was shining. The snow on the roof began to melt. The dripping water laved the faces of the dead.

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

Out in the field several men were digging a company grave.

So much has been written on the hardships endured by the wounded at the front that I will pass by this painful subject. What tortures these unfortunates suffered is aptly epitomized by an experience I had in the hospital of the American Red Cross in Budapest.

The man in charge of the hospital, Dr. Charles MacDonald, of the United States Army, had invited me to see his institution. I had come to a small room in which operations were undertaken when urgency made this necessary. During the day a large convoy of very bad cases had reached Budapest. Many of them were a combination of wounds and frostbite.

In the middle of the room stood an operation-table. On it lay a patient who was just recovering consciousness. I saw the merciful stupor of anesthesia leave the man's mind and wondered how he would take it. For on the floor, near the foot end of the operation-table, stood an enameled wash-basin, filled with blood and water. From the red fluid protruded two feet. They were black and swollen—frostbite. One of them had been cut off a little above the ankle, and the other immediately below the calf of the leg.

The amputation itself was a success, said the nurse. But there was little hope for the patient. He had another wound in the back. That wound itself was not serious, but it had been the cause of the man's condition, by depriving him

THE IRON RATION

temporarily of the power of locomotion. When he was shot, the man had fallen into some reeds. He was unconscious for a time, and when he recovered his senses he found that he could no longer move his legs.

He was lying in a No Man's Land between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian lines. For two days his feeble cries were unheard. Finally, some ambulance-men came across him. By that time his feet had been frozen. The wound in his back was given some attention at a first-aid station behind the line. The surgeons decided that the amputation of the feet could wait until Budapest was reached. Meanwhile the poison of gangrene was gaining admission to the blood.

The man's face was yellow. His whole body was yellow and emaciated. The lips no longer served to cover the teeth.

He was breathing pantingly—in short, quick gasps.

Slowly his mind shook off the fetters of the ether. A long breath—a faint sigh. The eyes opened.

They were Slav eyes of blue-gray. I saw in them the appeal of the helpless child, the protest of a being tortured, the prayer for relief of a despairing soul.

The man's lips moved. He wanted to say something. I bent over to catch the sibilant tones.

I had not caught them, and indicated that by a shake of the head. The man repeated. He

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

spoke in Polish, a language I do not know. To assure the man that I would find means of understanding him, I patted his cheek, and then called an orderly.

"He says that he would like you to fetch his wife and his children," said the orderly-interpreter, as he righted himself. "He says he is going to die soon, and wants to see them. He says that you will have to hurry up. He says that he will say a good word to the Lord for you if you will do him this favor."

"Ask him where they live," I said to the orderly. If it were at all possible I would do the man this kindness.

It was some village near Cracow. That was a long way off. If the man lived for two days his wish could be met.

"Tell the man that I will telegraph his wife to come as quickly as possible, but that she can't be here for a day or so," I instructed the interpreter.

A shadow of disappointment swept over the patient's face.

"Ask him if he knows where he is," I said.

The man did not know. I told the orderly to make it clear to him that he was in Budapest, and that his home in Galicia was far away. He was to be patient. I would bring his wife and children to him, if it could be done at all. Did the wife have the money to pay the railroad fare?

The patient was not sure. I read in his eyes that he feared the woman would not have the money. I eased his mind by telling him that I would pay the fares.

THE IRON RATION

Deeper gratitude never spoke from any face. The poor fellow tried to lift his hands, but could not. To assure him that his wish would be granted I once more patted his cheeks and forehead and then left the room, followed by the orderly and the wash-basin.

"There is no use telegraphing," said Doctor MacDonald. "He won't live longer than another hour, at the most."

Ten minutes later the man was dead. The operation-table was being wheeled down the corridor by the orderly. I had just stepped out of a ward.

The orderly stopped.

"You won't have to bring the woman here," he said, as he lifted the end of the sheet that covered the face.

As reward for my readiness to help the poor man, I have still in my mind the expression of relief that lay on the dead face. He had passed off in gladsome anticipation of the meeting there was to be.

I covered up the face and the orderly trundled the body away.

Some months later I sat in a room of the big military hospital in the Tatavla Quarter of Constantinople. On a bench against the wall opposite me were sitting a number of men in Turkish uniform. They were blind. Some of them had lost their eyes in hand-to-hand combat, more of them had been robbed of their sight in hand-grenade encounters.

Doctor Eissen, the oculist-surgeon of the hos-

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

pital, was about to fit these men with glass eyes. In the neat little case on the table were eyes of all colors, most of them brownish tints, a few of them were blue.

One of the Turks was a blond—son of a Greek or Circassian, maybe.

"These things don't help any, of course," said Doctor Eissen, as he laid a pair of blue eyes on a spoon and held them into the boiling water for sterilization. "But they lessen the shock to the family when the man comes home."

"Poor devils! I have treated them all. They are like a bunch of children. They are going home to-day. They have been discharged.

"Well, they are going home. Some have wives and children they will never see again—dependents they can no longer support. Some of them are luckier. They have nobody. The one who is to get these blue eyes used to be a silk-weaver in Brussa. He is optimistic enough to think that he can still weave. Maybe he can. That will depend on his fingers, I suppose. It takes often more courage to live after a battle than to live in it."

The dear government did not provide glass eyes. Doctor Eissen furnished them himself, and yet the dear government insisted that a report be made on each eye he donated. The ways of red tape are queer the world over.

"And when the blind come home the relatives weep a little and are glad that at least so much of the man has been returned to them."

In the corridor there was waiting a Turkish

THE IRON RATION

woman. Her son was one of those whom Doctor Eissen was just fitting with eyes. When he was through with this, he called in the woman. The young blind *asker* rose in the darkness that surrounded him.

Out of that darkness came presently the embrace of two arms and the sob:

“*Kusum!*” (“My lamb!”).

For a moment the woman stared into the fabricated eyes. They were not those she had given her boy. They were glass, immobile. She closed her own eyes and then wept on the broad chest of the son. The son, glad that his *walideh* was near him once more, found it easy to be the stronger of the two. He kissed his mother and then caressed the hair under the cap of the *yashmak*.

When the doctor had been thanked, the mother led her boy off.

Blind beggars are not unkindly treated in Constantinople. There is a rule that one must never refuse them alms. The least that may be given them are the words:

“*Inayet ola!*” (“God will care for you!”).

Not long after that I sat on the shambles at Suvla Bay, the particular spot in question being known as the Kiretch Tépé—Chalk Hill.

Sir Ian Hamilton had just thrown into the vast amphitheater to the east of the bay some two hundred thousand men, many of them raw troops of the Kitchener armies.

Some three thousand of these men had been left dead on the slopes of the hill. As usual,

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

somebody on Gallipoli had bungled and bungled badly. A few days before I had seen how a British division ate itself up in futile attacks against a Turkish position west of Kütchük Anafarta. The thing was glorious to look at, but withal very foolish. Four times the British assailed the trenches of the Turks, and each time they were thrown back. When General Stopford finally decided that the thing was foolish, he called it off. The division he could not call back, because it was no more.

It was so on Chalk Hill.

A hot August night lay over the peninsula. The crescent of a waning moon gave the dense vapors that had welled in from the Mediterranean an opalescent quality. From that vapor came also, so it seemed, the stench of a hundred battle-fields. In reality this was not so. The Turkish advance position, which I had invaded that night for the purpose of seeing an attack which was to be made by the Turks shortly before dawn, ran close to the company graves in which the Turks had buried the dead foe.

There is little soil on Gallipoli. It is hardly ever more than a foot deep on any slope, and under it lies lime that is too hard to get out of the way with pick and shovel. The company graves, therefore, were cairns rather than ditches. The bodies had been walled in well enough, but those walls were not airtight. The gases of decomposition escaped, therefore, and filled the landscape with obnoxious odor.

I had been warned against this. The warning

THE IRON RATION

I had disregarded for the reason that such things are not unfamiliar to me. But I will confess that it took a good many cigarettes and considerable will-power to keep me in that position—so long as was absolutely necessary.

When I returned to Constantinople everybody was speaking of the stench in the Suvla Bay terrain. There were many such spots, and returning soldiers were never slow in dwelling on the topic they suggested. The war did not appear less awesome for that.

But the shambles that came closest to the general public was the casualty lists published by the German government as a sort of supplement to the Berlin *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the semi-official organ of the German Imperial Government. At times this list would contain as many as eight thousand names, each with a letter or several after it—"t" for dead, "s v" for severely wounded, "l v" for lightly wounded, and so on.

It was thought at first that the public would not be able to stand this for long. But soon it was shown that literally there was no end to the fortitude of the Germans.

I was to spend some time on the Somme front. I really was not anxious to see that field of slaughter. But certain men in Berlin thought that I ought to complete my list of fronts with their "own" front. Hospitals and such no longer interested me. Wrecked churches I had seen by the score—and a ruined building is a ruined building. I said that I would visit the Somme front

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

in case I was allowed to go wherever I wanted. That was agreed to, after I had signed a paper relieving the German government of all responsibility in case something should happen to me "for myself and my heirs forever."

The front had been in eruption three weeks and murder had reached the climax when one fine afternoon I put up at a very unpretentious *auberge* in Cambrai.

The interior of the Moloch of Carthage never was so hot as this front, nor was Moloch ever so greedy for human life. Battalion after battalion, division after division, was hurled into this furnace of barrage and machine-gun fire. What was left of them trickled back in a thin stream of wounded.

For nine days the "drum" fire never ceased. From Le Transloy to south of Pozières the earth rocked. From the walls and ceilings of the old citadel at Cambrai the plaster fell, though many miles lay between it and the front.

Perhaps the best I could say of the Somme offensive is that none will ever describe it adequately—as it was. The poor devils really able to encompass its magnitude and terrors became insane. Those who later regained their reason did so only because they had forgotten. The others live in the Somme days yet, and there are thousands of them.

I could tell tales of horror such as have never before been heard—of a British cavalry charge near Hebuterne that was "stifled" by the barbed wire before it and the German machine-guns in

THE IRON RATION

its rear and flanks; of wounded men that had crawled on all-fours for long distances, resting occasionally to push back their entrails; of men cut into little pieces by shells and perforated like sieves by the machine-guns; and again of steel-nerved Bavarians who, coming out of the first trenches, gathered for a beer-drinking in an apple orchard not far from Manancourt.

But that seems *de trop*. I will leave that to some modern Verestchagin and his canvases.

There is a "still-life" of death that comes to my mind.

Not long after that I was in the Carpathians. General Brussilow was trying out his mass tactics.

The slaughter of man reached there aspects and proportions never before heard of. It was not the machine murder of the West Front—that is to say, it was not so much a factory for the conversion of live men into dead as it was a crude, old-fashioned abattoir.

On the slope of a massive mountain lies an old pine forest. In the clearings stand birches, whose white trunks pierce the gloom under the roof of dense, dark-green pine crowns. Where the clearings are, patches of late-summer sky may be seen. Through the pale blue travel leisurely the whitest of clouds, and into this background of soft blue and white juts the somber pine and the autumn-tinged foliage of the birch.

The forest is more a temple of a thousand columns than a thing that has risen from the little seeds in the pine cones. The trunks are

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

straight and seem more details of a monument than something which has just grown. There is a formal decorum about the trees and their aggregate. But the soft light under the crowns lessens that into something severely mournful.

The forest is indeed a sepulcher. On its floor lie thousands of dead Russians—first as close together as they can be packed, and then in layers on top of one another. It would seem that these bodies had been brought here for burial. That is not the case, however. The wounds in the tree trunks, cut by the streams of machine-gun bullets from the red trenches at the edge of the forest, indicate what happened. The first wave of Russians entered the forest, was decimated, and retreated. The second one met a similar fate. The third fared no better. The fourth came. The fifth. The sixth—twice more the Russian artillery urged on the Russian infantry.

Here they lie. Their bodies are distended by progressing dissolution. Narrow slits in the bloated faces show where once the merry and dreamy Slav eye laughed. Most mouths are open, still eager for another breath of air. Distended nostrils tell the same tale. From one mouth hangs a tongue almost bitten off. A face close by is but a mask—a shell splinter has cut off the back of the head, which now rests on the shoulder of the man.

To-morrow will come the Austro-Hungarian burial parties, dig holes and bury these human relics. Meanwhile the pines sough sorrowfully, or maybe they soughed like this before.

THE IRON RATION

Still a little later I was standing at an ancient stone bridge in the Vörös Torony defile in the Transylvanian Alps. It was a late afternoon in the late fall. In the defile it was still, save for an occasional artillery detonation near the Roumanian border, where the fight was going on.

The red of the beeches and oaks fitted well into the narrative I heard, and the song of the Alt River reminded that it, too, had played a part in the drama—the complete rout of the Second Roumanian army, a few days before. The breeze sweeping through the defile and along its wooded flanks brought with it the odor of the dead. The underbrush on each side of the road was still full of dead Roumanians. The gutter of the road was strewn with dead horses. Scores of them hung in the tree forks below the road. On a rock-ledge in the river dead men moved about under the impulse of the current.

The narrative:

"Do you see that little clearing up there?"

"The one below the pines?"

"No. The one to the left of that—right above the rocks."

"Yes."

"I was stationed there with my machine-guns," continued the Bavarian officer. "We had crept through the mountains almost on our bellies to get there. It was hard work. But we did it.

"At that we came a day too soon. We were entirely out of reach of Hermannstadt, and didn't know what was going on. For all we

IN THE HUMAN SHAMBLES

knew the Roumanians might have turned a trick. They are not half-bad soldiers. We were surprised, to say the least, when, on arriving here, we found that the road was full of traffic that showed no excitement.

"We heard cannonading at the head of the gorge, but had no means of learning what it was. We had been sent here to cut off the retreat of the Roumanians, while the Ninth Army was to drive them into the defile.

"For twenty-four hours we waited, taking care that the Roumanians did not see us. It was very careless of them, not to patrol these forests in sufficient force, nor to scent that there was something wrong when their small patrols did not return. At any rate, they had no notion of what was in store for them.

"At last the thing started. The German artillery came nearer. We could tell that by the fire. At noon the Roumanians began to crowd into the defile. A little later they were here.

"We opened up on them with the machine-guns for all we were worth. The men had been told to sweep this bridge. Not a Roumanian was to get over that. We wanted to catch the whole lot of them.

"But the Roumanians couldn't see it that way, it seems. On they came in a mad rush for safety. The artillery was shelling the road behind them, and we were holding the bridge almost airtight. Soon the bridge was full of dead and wounded. Others came and attempted to get over them. They fell. Still others pressed on,

THE IRON RATION

driven ahead by the maddened crowd in the rear.

"The machine-guns continued to work. Very soon this bridge was full of dead and wounded as high as the parapet. And still those fools would not surrender. Nor did they have sense enough to charge us. There were heaps of dead in front of the bridge, as far as the house over there.

"That should have been a lesson to them. But it wasn't. On they came. Some of them trampled over the dead and wounded. Those more considerate tried to walk on the parapet. The machine-guns took care that they did not get very far.

"By that time those shot on top of the heap began to slide into the river. Those not under fire scrambled down to the river and swam it—those who could swim; the others are in it yet. You can see them down there and wherever there is sand-bank or rock-ledge. But those who swam were the only ones that escaped us. That crowd was so panicky that it didn't have sense enough even to surrender. That's my theory.

"It was an awful sight. Do you think this war will end soon?"

In private life the narrator is a school-teacher in a little village in the Bavarian highlands.

VIII

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

NAPOLEON had a poor opinion of the hungry soldier. But it is not only the man-at-arms who travels on his belly—the nation at war does the same.

I have found that patriotism at a groaning table in a warm room, and with some other pleasant prospects added, is indeed a fine thing. The amateur strategist and politician is never in finer mettle than when his belt presses more or less upon a grateful stomach and when the mind has been exhilarated by a good bottle of wine and is then being tickled by a respectable Havana.

But I have also sat of nights—rainy nights at that—in the trenches and listened to what the men at the front had to say. They, too, were reasonably optimistic when the stomach was at peace. Of course, these men had their cares. Most of them were married and had in the past supported their families with the proceeds of their labor. Now the governments were feeding these families—after a fashion. What that fashion was the men came to hear in letters from home. It made them dissatisfied and often angry.

THE IRON RATION

I sat one night in the bombproof of an advanced position on the Sveta Maria, near Tolmein. My host was an Austrian captain whose ancestry had come from Scotland. A certain Banfield had thought it well to enter the Austro-Hungarian naval service many years ago, and the captain was one of his descendants.

Captain Banfield was as "sore" as the proverbial wet hen. He hadn't been home in some fourteen months, and at home things were not well. His wife was having a hard time of it trying to keep the kiddies alive, while the good Scotchman was keeping vigil on the Isonzo.

That Scotchman, by the way, had a reputation in the Austrian army for being a terrible *Draufgänger*, which means that when occasion came he was rather hard on the Italians. He would have been just as ruthless with the profiteers had he been able to get at them. Most uncomplimentary things were said by him of the food sharks and the government which did not lay them low.

But what Captain Banfield had to complain of I had heard a thousand times. His was not the only officer's wife who had to do the best she could to get along. Nor was that class worse off than any other. After all, the governments did their best by it. The real hardships fell upon the dependents of the common soldier.

I had made in Berlin the acquaintance of a woman who before the war had been in very comfortable circumstances. Though a mechanical engineer of standing, her husband had not been

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

able to qualify for service as an officer. He was in charge of some motor trucks in an army supply column as a non-commissioned officer. The little allowance made by the government for the wife and her four children did not go very far.

But the woman was a good manager. She moved from the expensive flat they had lived in before the mobilization. The quarters she found in the vicinity of the Stettiner railroad station were not highly desirable. But her genius made them so.

The income question was more difficult to solve. A less resourceful woman would have never solved it. But this one did. She found work in a laundry, checking up the incoming and outgoing bundles. Somebody had to suffer, however. In this case the children. They were small and had to be left to themselves a great deal.

I discussed the case with the woman.

"My children may get some bad manners from the neighbors with whom I have to leave them," she said. "But those I can correct later on. Right now I must try to get them sufficient and good food, so that their bodies will not suffer."

In that kind of a woman patriotism is hard to kill, as I had ample opportunity to observe.

At Constantinople I had made the acquaintance of the Baroness Wangenheim, widow of the late Baron Wangenheim, then ambassador at the Sublime Porte. Hearing that I was in Berlin, the baroness invited me to have tea with her.

THE IRON RATION

Tea is a highly socialized function, anyway, but this one was to be the limit in that respect. The repast—I will call it that—was taken in one of the best appointed *salons* I ever laid eyes on. Taste and wealth were blended into a splendid whole.

The maid came in and placed upon the fine marquetry taboret a heavy old silver tray. On the tray stood, in glorious array, as fine a porcelain tea service as one would care to own.

But we had neither milk nor lemon for the tea. We sweetened it with saccharine. There was no butter for the war-bread, so we ate it with a little prune jam. At the bottom of a cut-glass jar reposed a few crackers. I surmised that they were ancient, and feared, moreover, that the one I might be persuaded to take could not so easily be replaced. So I declined the biscuit, and, to make the baroness understand, offered her one of my bread coupons for the slice of bread I had eaten. This she declined, saying that the day was yet long and that I might need the bread voucher before it was over.

“I am no better off than others here,” the baroness explained to me in reply to a question. “I receive from the authorities the same number of food cards everybody gets, and my servants must stand in line like all others. The only things I can buy now in the open market are fish and vegetables. But that is as it should be. Why should I and my children get more food than others get?”

I admitted that I could not see why she should

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

be so favored. Still, there was something incongruous about it all. I had been the guest of the baroness in the great ambassadorial palace on the Boulevard Ayas Pasha in Pera, and found it hard to believe that the woman who had then dwelt in nothing less than regal state was now reduced to the necessity of taking war-bread with her tea—even when she had visitors.

"If this keeps up much longer the race will suffer," she said, after a while. "I am beginning to fear for the children. We adults can stand this, of course. But the children . . ."

The baroness has two small girls, and to change her thoughts I directed the conversation to Oriental carpets and lace.

Her patriotism, too, is of the lasting sort.

But the very same evening I saw something different. The name won't matter.

I had accepted an invitation to dinner. It was a good dinner—war or peace. Its *pièce de résistance* was a whole broiled ham, which, as my hostess admitted, had cost in the clandestine market some one hundred and forty marks, roughly twenty-five dollars at the rate of exchange then in force. There was bread enough and side dishes galore. It was also a meatless day.

The ham was one of several which had found the household in question through the channels of illicit trade, which even the strenuous efforts of the Prussian government had not been able to close as yet. The family had the necessary cash, and in order to indulge in former habits

THE IRON RATION

as fully as possible, it was using that cash freely.

After living for several days in plenty at the Palads in Copenhagen, and ascertaining that *paling*—eel—was still in favor with the Dutch of The Hague, I returned to Vienna. Gone once more were the days of wheat bread and butter.

One rainy afternoon I was contemplating the leafless trees on the Ring through the windows of the Café Sacher when two bodies of mounted police hove into view on the bridle path, as if they were really in a great hurry. I smelled a food riot, rushed down-stairs, caught a taxi on the wing, and sped after the equestrian minions of the law. Police and observer pulled up in the Josephstadt in the very center of a food disturbance.

The riot had already cooled down to the level of billingsgate. Several hundred women stood about listening to the epithets which a smaller group was flinging at a badly mussed-up store-keeper, who seemed greatly concerned about his windows, which had been broken by somebody.

The police mingled with the crowd. What had happened? Nothing very much, said the store-keeper. That remark fanned the flame of indignation which was swaying the women. Nothing much, eh? They had stood since high noon in line for butter and fat. Up to an hour ago the door of the shop had been closed. When finally it was opened the shopkeeper had announced that he had supplies only for about fifty fat coupons. Those who were nearest his

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

door would be served and the others could go home.

But somehow the crowd had learned that the man had received that morning from the Food Central enough fat to serve them all with the amount prescribed by the food cards. They refused to go away. Then the storekeeper, in the manner which is typically Viennese, grew sarcastically abusive. Before he had gone very far the women were upon him. Others invaded the store, found the place empty, and then vented their wrath on the fixtures and windows.

I was greatly interested in what the police would do with the rioters. But, instead of hauling the ringleaders to headquarters, they told them to go home and refrain in future from taking the law into their own hands. Within ten minutes the riot resolved itself into good-natured bantering between the agents of the law and the women, and the incident was closed, except for the shopkeeper, who in court failed to clear up what he had done with the supplies of butter and fat that had been assigned him for distribution. He lost his license to trade, and was fined besides.

Talking with several women, I discovered that none of them held the government responsible. The "beast" of a dealer was to blame for it all. This view was held largely because the police had gone to work in a most considerate manner, according to the instructions issued by an anxious government.

In a previous food riot, in the Nineteenth

THE IRON RATION

Municipal District, the gendarmes had been less prudent, with the result that the women turned on them and disfigured with their finger-nails many a masculine face—my visage included, because I had the misfortune of being mistaken for a detective. A muscular *Hausmeisterin*—janitress—set upon me with much vigor. Before I could explain, I was somewhat mussed up, though I could have ended the offensive by proper counter measures. It is best to attend such affairs in the Austrian equivalent for overalls.

Some weeks before, the Austrian premier, Count Stürgkh, had been shot to death by a radical socialist named Adler. In his statements Adler said that he had done this because of his belief that so long as Stürgkh was at the helm of the Austrian ship of state nothing would be done to solve the food situation.

There is no doubt that Adler had thoroughly surveyed the field of public subsistence. It is also a fact that he did the Austrian government a great service by killing the premier. The right and wrong of the case need not occupy us here. I am merely concerned with practical effects.

Count Stürgkh was an easy-going politician of a reactionary type. He gave no attention of an intelligent sort to the food problem, and did nothing to check the avarice of the food sharks, even when that avarice went far beyond the mark put up by the war-loan scheme. His inertia led during the first months of the war to much waste and later to regulations that could not

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

have been more advantageous to the private interests of the food speculators had they been made for them expressly. No statesman was ever carried to his grave with fewer regrets. In the Austrian government offices a sigh of relief was heard when it became known that Adler had shot the premier.

A revolution could not have been averted in Austria had Stürgkh continued at his post much longer. At first he was attacked only by the *Wiener Arbeiter Zeitung*, a socialist daily controlled by the father of Adler, who, in addition to being the editor-in-chief of the publication, is a member of the Austrian Reichsrath and the leader of the Austrian Socialist party. But later other papers began to object to Stürgkh's *dolce far niente* official life, among them the rather conservative *Neue Freie Presse*. Others joined. Ultimately the premier saw himself deserted even by the *Fremdenblatt*, the semi-official organ of the government.

Though charged with incompetency by some and with worse by others, Count Stürgkh refused to resign. Emperor Francis Joseph was staying his hands and this made futile all endeavor to remove the count from his high office. The old emperor thought he was doing the best by his people, and had it not been that the Austrians respected this opinion more than they should have done, trouble would have swept the country.

A new era dawned after Count Stürgkh's death. But his successors found little they could put in order. The larder was empty.

THE IRON RATION

Premier Körber tried hard to give the people more food. But the food was no longer to be had.

The loyalty of the Austrian people to their government was given the fire test in those days. Now and then it seemed that the crisis had come. It never came, however.

Other trips to the fronts presented a new aspect of the food situation. It was an odd one at that. The men who had formerly complained that their wives and children were not getting enough to eat had in the course of time grown indifferent to this. It was nothing unusual to have men return to the front before their furloughs had expired. At the front there were no food problems. The commissary solved them all. At home the man heard nothing but complaints and usually ate up what his children needed. Little by little the Central Power troops were infected with the spirit of the mercenary of old. Life at the front had its risks, but it also removed one from the sphere of daily cares. The great war-tiredness was making room for indifference and many of the men had truly become adventurers. So long as the *Goulaschkanone* shot the regular meals every day all was well. The military commissaries had succeeded by means of the stomach in making the man at the front content with his lot. Food conditions in the rear always offered a good argument, inarticulate but eloquent, nevertheless, why the man in the trenches should think he was well off. In the case of the many husbands and

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

fathers no mean degree of indifference and callousness was required before this frame of mind was possible. But the war had taken care of that. War hardly ever improves the individual. Out of sight, out of mind!

It was the craving stomach of the civil population that caused the several Central European governments most concern.

In the past, newspapers had been very careful when discussing the food question. They might hint at governmental inefficiency and double-dealing, but they could not afford to be specific. The censors saw to that. When the food situation was nearing its worst the several governments, to the surprise of many, relaxed political censorship sufficiently so that newspapers could say whatever they pleased on food questions. First came sane criticism and then a veritable flood of abuse.

But that was what the authorities wanted. Hard words break no bones, and their use is the only known antidote for revolution. Abuse was in the first place a fine safety valve, and then it gave the authorities a chance to defend themselves. To-day some paper would print an article in which, to the satisfaction of the reader, it was shown that this or that had been badly managed, and to-morrow the food authorities came back with a refutation that usually left a balance in favor of the government. The thing was adroitly done and served well to pull the wool over the eyes of the public.

Free discussion of the food problem was the

THE IRON RATION

order of the day. The light was let in on many things, and for the first time since the outbreak of the war the food shark had to take to cover. The governments let it be known that, while it was all very convenient to blame the authorities for everything, it would be just as well if the public began to understand that it had a share of responsibility. Informers grew like toadstools after a warm rain in June. The courts worked overtime and the jails were soon filled. The food situation was such that the lesser fry of the speculators had to be sacrificed to the wrath of the population. The big men continued, however, and pennies were now to be mobilized through the medium of commodities. It was no longer safe to squeeze the public by means of its stomach if patriotism was to remain an asset of the warring governments. The masses had been mulcted of their last by this method. Others were to supply the money needed for the war.

I feel justified in saying that the craving stomach of the Central states would have served the Allied governments in good stead in the fall of 1916 had their militaro-political objectives been less extensive and far-reaching. The degree of hunger, however, was always counteracted by the statements of the Allied politicians that nothing but a complete reduction of Germany and Austria-Hungary would satisfy them. I noticed that such announcements generally had as a result a further tightening of the belts. Nor could anybody remain blind to the fact that the

PATRIOTISM AND A CRAVING STOMACH

lean man is a more dangerous adversary than the sleek citizen. Discipline of the stomach is the first step in discipline of the mind. There is a certain joy in asceticism and the consciousness that eating to live has many advantages over living to eat.

The Central Power governments did not lose sight of this truth.

IX

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

MUCH nonsense has been disseminated on the success of the Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians in inventing substitutes for the things that were hard to get during the war. A goodly share of that nonsense came from the Germans and their allies themselves. But more of it was given to the four winds of heaven by admiring friends, who were as enthusiastic in such matters as they were ignorant of actual achievements.

That much was done in that field is true enough. But a great deal of scientific effort resulted in no more than what, for instance, synthetic rubber has been.

The first thing the German scientists did at the outbreak of the war was to perfect the system of a Norwegian chemist who had succeeded two years before in condensing the nitrogen of the air into the highly tangible form of crystals.

Many are under the impression that the process was something entirely new and distinctly a German invention. I have shown that this is not so. Even the Norwegian cannot claim

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

credit for the invention as in itself new. His merit is that he made the process commercially possible.

The thing was a huge success. The British blockade had made the importation of niter from overseas impossible. There is no telling what would have happened except for the fact that the practically inexhaustible store of nitrogen in the air could be drawn upon. It kept the Central Powers group of belligerents in powder, so long as there was vegetable fiber and coal-tar enough to be nitrated. Incidentally, some of the by-products of the nitrogen process served in good stead as fertilizer. The quantity won was not great, however.

I am not dealing with war as such, and for that reason I will pass by the many minor inventions of a purely military character that were made, nor would it be possible to do more than a cataloguing job if I were to attempt to refer here to all the innovations and substitutions that were undertaken as time went on.

Science multiplied by three the store of textiles held in the Central states at the outbreak of the war. This was done in many ways and by various means. Take cotton, for instance.

That almost anything could be converted into explosives by nitration has been known ever since Noble made nitroglycerine a commercial product. Any fat or fiber, even sugar, may be nitrated. That generally we use glycerine and cotton for the purpose is due to the fact that these materials are best suited for the process.

THE IRON RATION

But the fats that go into glycerine, and the cotton that becomes trinitrocellulose, could be put to better use by the Central states. In a general way coal-tar took the place of the former, and wood pulp that of cotton. That meant a tremendous saving in food and clothing.

I remember well the shiver that went through Germany when Great Britain declared cotton to be contraband. The Entente press was jubilant for weeks. But any chemist familiar with the manufacture of explosives could have told Sir Kendall that he was too optimistic. It was known even then that birch pulp and willow pulp made most excellent substitutes for cotton, if the process, or "operation," as the thing is known technically, is suitably modified. Coal-tar explosives were already *un fait accompli*.

Having attended to that little affair, the German scientists turned their attention to the winning of new textiles. There was the nettle in the hedges. Anciently, it had been to Europe what cotton was to the Mexico of the Aztecs. Times being hard, the nettle, now looked upon as a noxious weed fit only for goose fodder, was brought into its place. Very soon it was in the market as a textile, which often aspired to as imposing a name as "natural silk," a name the plant and its fiber well deserve.

The chemist had very little to do with that. The process was known and, being in the main similar to the production of flax fiber, presented no difficulties. The plant is cut, packed tightly under water so that the vegetable pulp may

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

decay, and is then dried in the sun and prepared for spinning.

Though the Central states were now importing annually from Turkey in Asia some eighteen thousand bales of cotton, considerable silk and wool, and were getting wool also in the Balkan countries, there continued to be felt a shortage in textiles and their raw materials. The situation was never serious. The fiber of worn materials was being used again, and so long as enough new material was added the shoddy produced gave ample satisfaction.

The paucity of textiles, however, gave rise to the paper-cloth industry. It was realized that for many purposes for which textiles were being used the paper cloth was well suited. That applied especially to all the uses manila and jute had been given in the past.

Even here it was not a question of inventing something. Paper twine had been in use in Central Europe for many years; it had, in fact, been laid under ban by the Austrian government—I don't know for what reason.

From paper twine to paper cloth was quite a step, however. Anybody can twist a piece of tissue-paper into a rope, but to make a reasonably strong thread or yarn of it is another matter.

The pulp for paper cloth must be tough and not pack too tightly while the stuff is being made. In this first form the product much resembles an unbleached tissue-paper. Since the paper has to be in rolls, its manufacture was

THE IRON RATION

undertaken by the mills which in the past had turned out "news print."

The rolls are then set into a machine, the principal feature of which is an arrangement of sharp rotary blades that will cut the sheet into strips or ribbons a quarter-inch wide—or wider, if that be desired. The ribbons are gathered on spools that revolve not only about their axes, but also about themselves, at a speed that will give the paper ribbon the necessary twist or spinning. Raw paper yarn has now been produced.

For many purposes the yarn can be used in the condition it is now in. For others it must be chemically treated. The process is not dissimilar to "parchmenting" paper. During the treatment the yarn hardens quite a little. When intended to make bagging and other textiles of that sort, this will not matter. The yarn must be softened again if intended for the paper cloth that is to take the place of serge, possibly. This is done mechanically, by means of beating.

The yarn does not have the necessary strength to form a fabric when not reinforced by a tougher fiber. As a rule, it becomes the warp of the cloth, flax, cotton, and even silk being employed as the weft. When intended for military overcoats a wool yarn is used. In this case the cloth is given a water-proofing treatment. A warm garment that is thoroughly water-proof without being air-tight results.

Paper cloth does not have the tensile qualities of good shoddy even, and for that reason

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

it is mostly used for purposes to which severe usage is not incident. For instance, it will make splendid sweater coats for ladies and children. It will also take the place of felt for hats.

The endeavor to find a substitute for sole leather was not so successful, even when finally it was decided that leather soles could be made only of animal tissue. There was leather enough for uppers always, and I am inclined to think that the supply of hides was large enough also to fill all reasonable demands for soles. The trouble lay in the nature of the hides, not in their scarcity. Horned cattle in Central Europe are stabled almost throughout the year and in this manner protected against the inclemency of the weather. A tender hide has been the result of this—a hide so tender that, while it will make the finest uppers, is next to useless as a sole.

A very interesting solution was found in the use of wooden soles. A thousand capable brains had been occupied with the sole-leather substitutes, and finally they ruled that wood in its natural state was the next best thing. So far as the rural population was concerned, that was well enough. But wooden soles and city pavements are irreconcilable. How to make that wooden sole bend a little at the instep was the question.

A sole was tried whose two halves were held together under the instep by a sort of specially designed hinge. That seemed an improvement over the single piece of wood, but soon it was found

THE IRON RATION

that it had the dangerous tendency to break down arches, which the hinged sole left unsupported at the very point where the support should have been.

The experiments were continued. Inventors and cranks worked at them for nearly two years. The best they ever did was to displace the hinge for a flexible bit of steel plate. Common sense finally came to the rescue. The best shoe with a wooden sole was the one that gave the foot lots of room about the ankle, held the instep snug, and made up for the flexibility of the leather sole by a rounding-off of the wooden sole under the toes. A good and very serviceable wooden-sole shoe with leather uppers had been evolved. The scientists had nothing to do with it.

It was the department of food substitution that was really the most interesting. For decades food in tabloid form has interested the men in the chemical laboratories. Some of them have asserted that man could be fed chemically. Theoretically that may be done; in practice it is impossible. If the intestinal tracts could be lined with platinum men might be able to live on acids of almost any sort. Such is not the case at present, however.

The very wise pure-food laws of the Central states were thrown on the rubbish-heap by the governments when stretching the food-supply became necessary. They were first knocked into the proverbial cocked hat by the food sharks. What these men were doing was known to the

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

governments, but these were not times to be particular. If it were possible to adulterate flour with ground clover there was no reason why this should not be done, even if the profit went into the pockets of the shark, so long as the same individual would later subscribe to the war loans. It was merely another way of mobilizing the pennies and their fractions.

But too much of this an end had to be put. Too much exploitation of the populace might cause internal trouble. It might also lead to ruining the health of the entire nation, and that was a dangerous course.

How to substitute flour was indeed a great and urgent problem. There were those enthusiasts who thought that it could be done chemically. Why leave to the slow and uncertain process of plant conversion that which chemistry could do quickly and surely? If certain elements passing through plant life made flour in the end, why not have them do that without the assistance of the crop season?

I read some very learned articles on that subject. But there was always an *if*. If this and that could be overcome, or if this and that could be done, the thing would be successful.

It never was, of course. Organic life rests on Mother Earth in layers, and the more developed this life is the farther it lies above the mere soil—the inorganic. The baby needing milk is above the cow, the cow needing vegetable food is above the plants, and even the plants do not depend on inorganic elements alone, as

THE IRON RATION

can be learned by any farmer who tries to raise alfalfa on soil that does not contain the cultures the plant must have. These cultures again feed on organic life.

This was the rock on which the efforts of the chemical-food experts were wrecked. Soon they began to see that substitution would have to take the place of invention and innovation.

They used to sell in the cafés of Vienna, and other large cities, a cake made mostly of ground clover meal, to which was added the flour of horse-chestnuts, a little rice, some glucose, a little sugar and honey, and chopped prunes when raisins could not be had. The thing was very palatable, and nutritious, as an analysis would show. There were enough food units in it to make the vehicle, which here was clover meal, really worth while.

I mention this case to show what are the principal requirements of food for human consumption. There must be a vehicle if alimentation is to be normal. This vehicle is generally known as ashes. It is to the human alimentary system what bread is to butter and meat in the sandwich. Through it are distributed the actual food elements, and in their preparation for absorption it occupies the place of the sand and grit we find in the crop of the fowl. In the toothsome cake I have described, these factors had been duly honored, and for that reason the cake was a success even at the price it sold for—an ounce for three cents.

The first war-bread baked was a superior sort

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

of rye bread, containing in proportions 55, 25, 20, rye flour, wheat flour, and potato meal or flakes, sugar, and fat. That was no great trick, of course. Any baker could have thought of that. But rye and wheat flour were not always plentiful, even when government decree insisted that they be milled to 85 per cent. flour, leaving 15 per cent. as bran—the very outer hull. Oats, Indian corn, barley, beans, peas, and buckwheat meal had to be added as time went on.

That was a more difficult undertaking and afforded the scientist the chance to do yeoman service. He was not found wanting.

Imports of coffee had become impossible in 1916. The scant stores on hand had been stretched and extenuated by the use of chicory and similar supplements. I used to wonder how it was possible to make so little go so far, despite the fact that the *demi-tasse* was coffee mostly in color by this time.

A period of transition from coffee to coffee substitutes came.

The first substitute was not a bad one. It was made mostly of roasted barley and oats and its flavor had been well touched off by chemicals won from coal-tar. The brew had the advantage of containing a good percentage of nutritive elements. Taken with a little milk and sugar it had all the advantages of coffee, minus the effect of caffeine and plus the value of the food particles. It was palatable even when taken with sugar only. Without this complement it was impossible, however.

THE IRON RATION

But the grain so used could be put to better purpose. This led to the introduction of the substitute of a substitute. The next sort of artificial coffee—*Kaffee-ersatz-ersatz*—was made of roasted acorns and beechnuts, with just enough roasted barley to build up a coffee flavor. This product, too, was healthful. It may even be said that it was a little better than the first substitute. It certainly was more nourishing, but also more expensive.

There were not acorns and beechnuts enough, however. Much of the store had been fed to the porkers, and before long the excellent acorn-beechnut coffee disappeared.

A third substitute came in the market. Its principal ingredients were carrots and yellow turnips.

To find substitutes for tea was not difficult. The bloom of the linden-tree, mixed with beech buds, makes an excellent beverage, and those who dote on “oolong” can meet their taste somewhat by adding to this a few tips of pine. If too much of the pine bud is used a very efficacious emetic will result, however.

The mysteries of cocoa substitutions are a little above me. I can say, however, that roasted peas and oats have much to do with it. Some of the materials employed were supplied by coal-tar and synthetic chemistry.

It was really remarkable what this coal-tar would do for the Germans and their allies. It provided them with the base for their explosives, made their dyes, and from it were made at one

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

period of the war, by actual enumeration, four hundred and forty-six distinct and separate chemical products used in medicine, sanitation, and food substitution. If there be such a thing as an elixir of life, coal-tar may be expected to furnish it.

But the net gain in this casting about for substitutes was slight indeed. The grains, nuts, and vegetables that were used as substitutes for coffee would have had the same food value if consumed in some other form. The advantage was that their conversion served to placate the old eating habits of the public. To what extent these had to be placated was made plain on every meatless, fatless, or wheatless or some other "less" day or period.

There was the rice "lamb" chop, for instance. The rice was boiled and then formed into lumps resembling a chop. Into the lump a skewer of wood was stuck to serve as a bone, and to make the illusion more complete a little paper rosette was used to top off the "bone." All of it was very *comme il faut*. Then the things were fried in real mutton tallow, and when they came on the table its looks and aroma, now reinforced by green peas and a sprig of watercress, would satisfy the most exacting. Nor could fault be found with the taste.

The vegetable beefsteak was another thing that gave great satisfaction, once you had become used to the color of the thing's interior, which was pale green—a signal in a real steak that it should not be eaten. The steak in question was a synthetic

THE IRON RATION

affair, composed of cornmeal, spinach, potatoes, and ground nuts. An egg was used to bind the mass together, and some of the culinary lights of Berlin and Vienna succeeded in making it cohesive enough to require the knife in real earnest.

What I have outlined here so far may be called the private effort at substitution. But substitution also had a governmental application. Its purpose was to break the populace of its habit of eating highly concentrated foods, especially fats.

The slaughter of the porkers in 1914 had accidentally led the way to this policy. The shortage in fats caused by this economic error was soon to illustrate that the masses could get along very well on about a quarter of the fat they had consumed in the past. Soon it was plain, also, that the health of the public could be improved in this manner by the gradual building up of a stronger physique.

It would have been easy to again crowd the pigsties. The animal is very prolific, and a little encouragement of the pig-raisers would have had that result inside of a year had it been desired. But it was not done. It was difficult to get the necessary feed for these animals, and the small quantities that could be imported from Roumania were never a guarantee that the farmers would not feed their pigs with home-raised cereals and other foods that were of greater value to the state in the form of cereal and vegetable food for the population. The prices of fats and meats were well up. A hundred pounds of wheat con-

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

verted into animal products would bring nearly three times what the farmer could get for the grain. Illicit trading in these articles, moreover, was easier carried on than in breadstuffs.

Since no animal fats, be they butter, lard, or suet, could be produced without sacrificing a goodly share of the country's cereal supply, it was necessary to keep the animal-product industry down to its lowest possible level. It was easier to distribute equitably the larger masses of cereals and vegetables than the concentrated foods into which animal industry would convert them. To permit that would also have led to more hardship for the lower classes at a time when money was cheap and prices correspondingly high.

The crux of the situation was to fill the public stomach as well as conditions permitted, and the consumption of fats could have no place in that scheme under the circumstances. It was decided, therefore, to have the human stomach do what heretofore had largely been attended to by the animal industries. An entire series of frictional waste could in that manner be eliminated, as indeed it was.

The same policy led to a reduction in the supply of eggs. To keep the human stomach occupied had become as much a necessity as furnishing nutriment to the body.

I doubt whether without this happy idea the Central states would have been able to carry on the war. The saving due to the policy was immense—so stupendous, in fact, that at the same

THE IRON RATION

time it discounted the impossibility of importing foodstuffs and took ample care of the losses in food production due to the shortage of labor and fertilizers. It was the one and only thing that stood between the Central Powers and swift defeat.

It is needless to say that the effect upon certain classes of population was not so propitious. The lack of sufficient good milk caused an increase in infant mortality. The feeble of all ages were carried off quickly when concentrated foods could no longer be had to keep them alive, and persons of middle age and old age suffered so much that death was in many cases a welcome relief. While the healthy adult men and women did not suffer by this sort of rationing—grew stronger, in fact—those past the prime of life could not readjust themselves to the iron food discipline that was enforced. The alimentary system in that case had entered upon its downward curve of assimilation over elimination, and, constitutionally modified by the ease afforded by concentrated foods, it declined rapidly when these foods were withdrawn. Driven by necessity, the several states practised wholesale manslaughter of the less fit.

I was greatly interested in these “home” casualties, and discussed them with many, among them life-insurance men, educators, and government officials. The first class took a strictly business view of the thing. The life-insurance companies were heavy losers. But there was no way out. Nothing at all could be

SUB-SUBSTITUTING THE SUBSTITUTE

done. It was hoped that the better physical trim of the young adults, and the resulting longevity, would reimburse the life-insurers. If the war did not last too long this would indeed happen. Premiums would have to be increased, however, if it became necessary for the government to apply further food restrictions.

Some of the educators took a sentimental view of the thing. Others were cynically rational. It all depended upon their viewpoint and age. Those who believed in the theories of one Osler could see nothing wrong in this method of killing off the unfit aged. Their opposites thought it shameful that better provisions were not made for them.

The attitude of the government was more interesting. It took cognizance of the individual and social aspects involved—of sentiment and reality. That manslaughter of the aged and unfit was the result of the food policy was not denied. But could the state be expected to invite dissolution because of that?

"I understand you perfectly," said a certain food-dictator to me once. "My own parents are in that position, or would be, were it not that they have the means to buy the more expensive foods. That thousands of the poor aged are going to a premature death is only too evident. But what are we to do? We cannot for their sake lay down our arms and permit our enemies to impose upon us whatever conditions they please. Quite apart from the interests of the state as a political unit, there is here to be con-

THE IRON RATION

sidered the welfare of the fit individuals. Being fit, they have the greatest claim to the benefits that come from the social and economic institutions which political independence alone can give. That the less fit must make sacrifices for that is to be expected, for the very good reason that it is the fit class which is carrying on the war and shedding its blood for the maintenance of the state. By the time we have provided for the infants and babies there is nothing left for the aged over and above what the adult individual gets. Of the babies we must take care because they are the carriers of our future. Of the aged we should take care because they have given us our past. But when it comes to choose which class to preserve, I would say the young every time."

For live-stock-owning governments that is indeed the proper view to take; and since all governments belong to that class, more or less, it seems futile to find fault with this food-dictator. The man forced to decide whether he would give the last morsel to his old father or his young son might select to divide that morsel evenly between them. But if the old man was worth his salt at all he would insist that the boy be given all the food. A social aggregate that cannot act in accordance with this principle is shortening its own day.

X

THE CRUMBS

OCTOBER, 1916, marked the high water of the Central European public-subsistence problems. Misery had reached the limits of human endurance. For the next seven months the strain caused by it tore at the vitals of the Central states. The measures then conceived and applied would prove whether or no the collapse of Germany and her allies could be averted. So serious was the situation that the several governments felt compelled to send out peace-feelers, one or two of them being definite propositions of a general nature.

The crumbs and scraps had been saved for a long time even then. As far back as November, 1914, all garbage had been carefully sorted into rubbish and food remnants which might serve as animal feed. But that was no longer necessary now. Food remnants no longer went into the garbage-cans. Nor was it necessary to advise the public not to waste old clothing and other textiles. The ragman was paying too good a price for them. Much of the copper and brass complement of households had been turned over

THE IRON RATION

to the government, and most copper roofs were being replaced by tin. The church bells were being smelted. Old iron fetched a fancy price. In the currency iron was taking the place of nickel. Old paper was in keen demand. The sweepings of the street were being used as fertilizer. During the summer and fall the hedges had been searched for berries, and in the woodlands thousands of women and children had been busy gathering mushrooms and nuts. To meet the ever-growing scarcity of fuel the German government permitted the villagers to lop the dead wood in the state forests. To ease the needs of the small live-stock-owner he was allowed to cut grass on the fiscal woodlands and gather the dead leaves for stable bedding.

It was a season of saving scraps. The entire economic machinery seemed ready for the scrap-heap. Much of the saving that was being practised was leading to economic waste.

The city streets were no longer as clean as they used to be. During the summer much light-fuel had been saved by the introduction of "summer time." The clocks were set ahead an hour, so that people rose shortly after dawn, worked their customary ten hours in the shops and factories, and then still had enough daylight to work in their gardens. When dusk came they went to bed. Street traction had been limited also. The early closing of shops, cafés, and restaurants effected further savings in light, and, above all, eatables.

The countryside presented a dreary picture.

THE CRUMBS

Nobody had time to whitewash the buildings, and few cared about the appearance of their homes. What is the use? they said. They could wait until better times came. The dilapidated shutter kept fit company with the rain-streaked wall. The untidy yard harmonized with the neglected garden in a veritable diapason of indifference. The implements and tools of the farm were left where they had been used last. The remaining stock had an unkempt look about it.

I remember how during a trip in Steiermark I once compared the commonwealth with a lonely hen I saw scratching for food in a yard. The rusty plumage of the bird showed that nobody had fed it in months. There was no doubt, though, that somebody expected that hen to lay eggs.

It was now a question, however, of saving the scraps of the state—of the socio-economic fabric. The flood of regulation which had spilled over Central Europe had pulled so many threads out of the socio-economic life that, like a thin-worn shawl, it had no longer the qualities of keeping warm those under it. The threads had been used by those in the trenches, and the civilian population had been unable to replace them.

It would be quite impossible to give within the confines of a single volume a list of these regulations, together with a discussion of their many purposes, tendencies, and effects. I would have to start with the economic embryo of all social economy—the exchange of food between the

THE IRON RATION

tiller of the soil and the fisherman—to make a good job of that.

A little intensive reasoning will show what the processes applied in Central Europe had been up to the fall of 1916. Regulated was then almost everything man needs in order to live: bread, fats, meat, butter, milk, eggs, peas, beans, potatoes, sugar, beer, fuel, clothing, shoes, and coal-oil. These were the articles directly under control. Under the indirect influence of regulation, however, lay everything, water and air alone excepted.

Now, the purpose of this regulation had been to save and to provide the government with the funds needed for the war. That was well enough so long as there was something to save. But the time was come in which the governmental effort at saving was futile endeavor. There was nothing that could be saved any more. Surpluses had ceased to be. Production no longer equaled consumption, and when that state of things comes crumbs and scraps disappear of themselves.

Once I had to have a pair of heels straightened. I had no trouble finding a cobbler. But the cobbler had no leather.

“Surely,” I said, “you can find scraps enough to fix these heels!”

“But, I can’t, sir!” replied the man. “I cannot buy scraps, even. There is no more leather. I am allowed a small quantity each month. But what I had has been used up long ago. If you have another old pair of shoes, bring them around. I can use part of the soles

THE CRUMBS

of them to repair the heels, and for the remainder I will pay with my labor. I won't charge you anything for mending your shoes."

I accepted the proposal and learned later that the cobbler had not made so bad a bargain, after all.

A similar policy had to be adopted to keep the Central populations in clothes. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey produce considerable quantities of wool, flax, silk, and cotton. But what they produce was not enough to go around, and the men at the front were wearing out their uniforms at an alarming rate. The military authorities felt that nothing would be gained by making the uniforms of poor cloth. The wear and tear on the fabric was severe. Labor in the making and distribution of the uniforms could be saved only by using the best materials available.

For the civilians it became necessary to wear shoddy. And to obtain shoddy every scrap must be saved. The time came when an old all-wool suit brought second-hand as good a price as a new suit fresh from the mill and the tailor shop. With the addition of a little new fiber that old suit might make two new ones. The old material was "combed" into wool again, and to this was added some new wool, cotton, or silk, and "new" goods appeared again on the counter.

The "I-cash" never had done such business before. The attics and cellars were ransacked, and since those who had most old clothing to sell bought hardly any at all now, the pinch of

THE IRON RATION

the war in clothing was really never felt very much by the poor. To prevent the spread of contagious diseases the several governments saw to it that the shoddy was thoroughly sterilized.

But economies of that sort are more or less automatic and lie within the realm of supply and demand. Unchecked, they may also become the cause of economic waste. The time comes when shoddy is an absolute loss. When fibers are used over and over, together with new elements, the oldest of them finally cease to have value. That means that the fabric does not have the wearing qualities which will give economic compensation for the labor spent on it and the price asked from the consumer. The stuff may be good to look upon, but in times of war that is not essential.

The profiteer found a fine field in the manufacture of shoddy. All first-hand shoddy he would sell as new material, and before he admitted that a certain piece of cloth was "indifferent" in quality, it had to be poor indeed. He would ask a good price for a suit that might fall to pieces in the first rain, and the consumer was left to do the best he could with the thing. When the consumer complained he would be told that the "war" was responsible, and the consumer, knowing in a general and superficial manner that things were indeed scarce, would decide to be reasonable.

But the government could not take that easy view. Labor which might have been put to better use had been expended in the making of

THE CRUMBS

that shoddy, and now the fabric served no good purpose. That had to be avoided. It was far better to abandon fiber of this sort than to have it become the cause of waste in labor and the reason for further discontent. Labor that results in nothing more than this is non-productive, and the governments of Central Europe knew only too well that they had no hands to spare for that kind of unavailing effort.

I ran into a case of this sort in Bohemia. A large mill had turned out a great deal of very poor shoddy. The cloth looked well, and, since wool fiber newly dyed makes a good appearance even long after its wearing qualities have departed forever, the firm was doing a land-office business. All went well until some of the fine cloth got on the backs of people. Then trouble came. Some of the suits shrank when wet, while others did the very opposite. The matter came to the attention of the authorities.

Experts in textiles examined the cloth. Some of the output was found to contain as much as 60 per cent. old fiber, and there was no telling how many times this old fiber had been made over. It was finally shown that, had the manufacturer been content with a little less profit, he could have converted the new fiber—which, by the way, he had obtained from the government Fiber Central—into some thirty thousand yards of first-class shoddy under a formula that called for 65 per cent. new fiber and 35 per cent. old. As it was, he had turned the good raw material into nearly fifty-two thousand yards of fabrics

THE IRON RATION

that were not worth anything and he had wasted the labor of hundreds of men and women besides.

The man had been trying to make use of crumbs and scraps for his own benefit. Personal interests had led, in this instance, to an attempt to convert an economic negative into a positive. The useless fiber was a minus which no effort in plus could cause to have any other value than that which this profit-hunter saw in it. By the rational economist the shoddy had been abandoned, and all effort to overcome the statics of true economy, as here represented by the un-serviceableness of the fiber for the use to which it had been assigned, was bound to be an economic waste.

Cases such as these—and there were thousands of them—showed the authorities that there was danger even in economy. The crumbs and scraps themselves were useless in the end. Beyond a certain point all use of them resulted in losses, and that point was the minimum of utility that could be obtained with a maximum of effort. The economic structure could not stand on so poor a sand foundation.

But the several governments were largely responsible for this. They had regulated so much in behalf of economy that they had virtually given the economic shark *carte blanche*.

There was a season when I attended a good many trials of men who had run afoul of the law in this manner. They all had the same excuse. Nothing had been further from their minds than

THE CRUMBS

to make in times such as these excessive profits. They would not think of such a thing. If they had used poor materials in the things they manufactured, it was due entirely to their desire to stretch the country's resources. In doing that they had hoped to lighten the burden of the government. Conservation had become necessary and everybody would have to help in that. They had been willing to do their bit, and now the authorities were unreasonable enough to find fault with this policy.

At first many a judge had the wool pulled over his eyes in that manner. But in the end the scheme worked no longer. Usually the limit of punishment fell on the offender.

Abuses of this sort had much to do with an improvement in conservation methods. So far as the textile industry was concerned it led to the control by the government Raw-Material Centrals, which were established rather loosely at the beginning of the war, of all fibers. The ragman thereafter turned over his wares to these centrals, and when a spinner wanted material he had to state what he wanted it for and was then given the necessary quantities in proportions. That helped, and when the government took a better interest in the goods manufactured this avenue of economic waste was closed effectively. With these measures came the clothing cards for the public. After that all seemed well. The poorer qualities of cloth disappeared from the market overnight, and a suit of clothing was now sure to give fair value for the price.

THE IRON RATION

I have made use of this example to illustrate what the factors in regulation and conservation were at times, and how difficult it was to unscramble the economic omelet which the first conservation policies had dished up.

There were other crumbs and scraps, however. Not the least of them was the socio-economic organism itself. That sensitive thing had been doctored so much that only a major operation could again put it on its feet. Economy fadists and military horse-doctors alike had tried their hands on the patient, and all of them had overlooked that the only thing there was wrong with the case was malnutrition. Everybody was trying to get the usual quantities and qualities of milk from a cow that was starving. Poor Bossy!

Man lives not by food alone; nor does society. It takes a whole lot of things to run a state. While the government had already in its grasp all the distribution and consumption of food, there were many things it did not care to interfere with, even if they were almost as important as food. These things were the products of industry, rather than the fruits of the fields, though usually, as is natural, it was difficult to draw a strong line of demarcation in the division of spheres. In social economy that has always been so. To get the true perspective, take a dozen pebbles, label them food, fuel, clothing, and whatever else occurs to you, and then throw the pebbles in the pond. You will find that the circular wavelets caused by the pebbles will soon run into and across one another, and if by chance you

THE CRUMBS

have followed the waves of food you will notice that while they have been broken by the impact of the others they still remain discernible.

Into the rippling pond the several governments had each thrown the cobblestones of regulation. The food, fuel, and clothing ripples were still there, of course, but they had been so obliterated that it was now difficult to trace them on the regulation waves.

But the waves, too, subsided, and on the back-wash of them the authorities read lessons which suggested saner methods—methods whose conception and application were attended by a better regard for the nature of the operation, be this production, distribution, or consumption.

The saving of crumbs and scraps had not been without its value. It tended to make men short-sighted, however. The governments of Central Europe wanted to limit consumption to the absolutely necessary, but overlooked that their *modus operandi* gave cause to serious losses. The various authorities did not wish to interfere too much with normal currents of economic life. That was well enough in a way, but had disastrous consequences. A shortage in the necessities of life was the great fact of the day. It could be met only by restricting consumption. But the machinery of this restriction was a haphazard thing. It promoted hoarding.

There have been those who have condemned the hoarder in the roundest of terms. I am not so sure that he deserves all of the anathemas that have been hurled at him. When a government

THE IRON RATION

shouts day in and day out that the worst will come to pass if everybody does not save the crumbs, the more easily alarmed are bound to think only of themselves and of their own. High prices will cease to be a deterrent, for the reason that war brings only too many examples of the fact that only food and not money will sustain life. To act in accordance with this may be a weakness, but it is also along the lines of a natural condition, if self-preservation be indeed the first law of nature. Soon there are found those who promote and pamper this weakness for a profit. Food is then stored away by the majority. Some will waste much of it in overconsumption, while more will permit the food to spoil by improper storage methods, especially when the food has to be secreted in cellars and attics, wardrobes and drawers, as happens when government by inspection becomes necessary. But of this I have spoken already in its proper place.

XI

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

FOOD-REGULATORS will be wroth, I suppose, if I should state that the consumption of life's necessities can be regulated and diminished for its own sake, and that high prices are not necessarily the only way of doing this. At the same time I must admit that prices are bound to rise when demand exceeds supply. In our system of economy that is a natural order of affairs. But this tendency, when not interfered with, would also result in a quick and adequate betterment in wages. In Central Europe, however, the cost of living was always about 50 per cent. ahead of the slow increase in earnings. That 50 per cent. was the increment which the government and its economic minions needed to keep the war going. What regulation of prices there was kept this in mind always. In order that every penny in the realm might be mobilized and then kept producing, no change in these tactics could be permitted.

The food shark and price-boosting middleman were essential in this scheme, and when these

THE IRON RATION

were dropped by the government, one by one, it was nothing but a case of:

The Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go.

Elimination of the middleman worked upward, much as does a disease that has its bed in the slums. When the consumer had been subjected to the limit of pressure, the retailer felt the heavy hand of the government. It got to be the turn of the wholesaler and commission-man, and in October of 1916, the period of which I speak here, only the industrial and commercial kings and the banking monarchs were still in favor with the government. The speculators then operating were either the agents of these powers or closely affiliated with them.

In the fall of 1916 the war system of national economy had taken the shape it has to-day. Food had become the irreducible minimum. Not alone was the quantity on hand barely sufficient to feed the population, but its price could no longer be increased if the masses were not to starve for lack of money instead of lack of food. The daily bread was now a luxury. Men and women had to rise betimes and work late into the night if they wanted to eat at all.

Let me now speak of the sort of revision of economic regulations that was in vogue before the adoption of the new system.

That revision started with the farmer—the producer of food. Some requisitioning had been done on the farms for strictly military purposes.

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

Horses and meat animals had been taken from the farmer for cash at the minimum prices established by the authorities. Forage and grain for the army had been commandeered in a like manner, and in a few cases wagons, plows, and other implements. Further than that (taking into account the minimum prices, which were in favor of the farmer and intended to stimulate production), the government had not actually interfered with the tiller of the soil. He had gone on as before, so far as a shortage of labor, draft animals, and fertilizers permitted. He had not prospered, of course, but on the whole he was better off than the urbanite and industrial worker, for the reason that he could still consume of his food as much as he liked. The government had, indeed, prescribed what percentage of his produce he was to turn over to the public, but often that interference went no further.

But in the growing and crop season of 1916 the several governments went on a new tack. Trained agriculturists, employees of the Food Commissions and Centrals, looked over the crops and estimated what the yield would be. From the total was then subtracted what the establishment of the farmer would need, and the rest had to be turned over to the Food Centrals at fixed dates.

The farmers did not take kindly to this. But there was no help. Failure to comply with orders meant a heavy fine, and hiding of food brought similar punishment and imprisonment besides.

THE IRON RATION

With this done, the food authorities began to clear up a little more in the channels of distribution. The cereals were checked into the mills more carefully, and the smaller water-mills, which had in the past charged for their labor by retaining the bran and a little flour, were put on a cash basis. For every hundred pounds of grain they had to produce so many pounds of flour, together with by-products when these latter were allowed.

The flour was then shipped to a Food Central, and this would later issue it to the bakers, who had to turn out a fixed number of loaves. To each bakery had been assigned so many consumers, and the baker was now responsible that these got the bread which the law prescribed.

Potatoes and other foods were handled in much the same manner. The farmer had to deliver them to the Food Central in given quantities at fixed dates, and the Central turned them over to the retailers for sale to the public in prescribed allotments. Now and then small quantities of "unrestricted" potatoes would get to the consumer through the municipal markets. But people had to rise at three o'clock in the morning to get them. This meant, of course, that only those willing to lose hours of needed sleep for the sake of a little extra food got any of these potatoes.

The ways of the efficient food-regulator are dark and devious but positive in their aim.

The meat-supply was not further modified. The meatless days and exorbitant prices had made further regulation in that department un-

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

necessary. Milk and fat, however, as well as eggs, were made the subject of further attention by the Food Commissions. All three of them were as essential to the masses as was bread, and for that reason they passed within the domain of the food zone—*Rayon*.

In their case, however, the authorities left the supply uncontrolled. The farmer sold to the Food Central what milk, butter, lard, suet, tallow, vegetable-oil, and eggs he produced, and the Central passed them on to the retailers, who had to distribute them to a given number of consumers. The same was done in the case of sugar.

Such a scheme left many middlemen high and dry. Those who could not be of some service in the new system, or found it not worth while to be connected with it, took to other lines of industry.

The government had left a few such lines open. That, however, was not done in the interest of the middlemen. The better-paid working classes still had pennies that had to be garnered, and these pennies, now that food was surrounded by cast-iron regulations and laws, went into the many other channels of trade.

I made the acquaintance of a man who in the past had bought and sold on commission almost anything under the heading of food. Now it would be a car-load of flour, then several car-loads of potatoes, and when business in these lines was poor he would do a legal or illicit business in butter and eggs. Petroleum was a side

THE IRON RATION

line of his, and once he made a contract with the government for remounts. I don't think there was anything the man had not dealt in. But the same can be said of every one of the thousands that used to do business in the quiet corners of the Berlin and Vienna cafés.

I should mention here that the Central European commission-man does not generally hold forth in an office. The café is his place of business—not a bad idea, since those with whom he trades do the same. There are certain cafés in Vienna, Berlin, and Budapest, and the other cities, that exist almost for that purpose. In any three of them one can buy and sell anything from a paper of pins to a stack of hay.

My acquaintance found that the new order of things in the food department left him nothing but the pleasant memory of the "wad" he had made under the old régime. He took to matches.

Matches were uncontrolled and rather scarce. Soon he had a corner in matches. He made contracts with the factories at a price he could not have paid without a large increase in the selling price of the article. But he knew how to bring that condition about.

Before long the price of matches went up. They had been selling at about one-quarter cent American for a box of two hundred. The fancier article sold for a little more.

When the price was one cent a box, my acquaintance began to unload judiciously. Merchants did not want to be without matches again, and bought with a will. The speculator cleared

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

one hundred and twenty thousand crowns on his first release, I was told. His average monthly profit after that was something like forty thousand crowns.

Somehow he managed to escape prosecution under the anti-high-profit decree then in force. No doubt that was due to his connections with the Vienna Bank Food Ring. At any rate, his name appeared as one of the large subscribers to the fifth Austrian war loan, and, needless to say, he paid his share of the war-profit tax.

In this case fractions of pennies were mobilized. I suppose almost anybody who can afford fuel can afford to light a fire with a match that costs the two-hundredth part of a cent. No doubt the government thought so. Why not relieve the population of that little accumulation of economic "fat"?

Another genius of that sort managed to get a corner in candles. How he managed to get his stock has never been clear to me, since the food authorities had long ago put a ban on the manufacture of candles. I understand that some animal fats, suet and tallow, are needed to make the paraffin "stand" up. Those animal fats were needed by the population in the form of food.

But the corner in candles was *un fait accompli*. The man was far-sighted. He held his wares until the government ordered lights out in the houses at eleven o'clock, and these candles were then welcome at any price, especially in such houses where the janitor would at the stroke of

THE IRON RATION

the hour throw off the trunk switch in the cellar.

Here was another chance to get pennies from the many who could afford to buy a candle once or twice a week. The government had no reason to interfere. Those pennies, left in the pockets of the populace, would have never formed part of a war loan or war-profit taxes.

Sewing-thread was the subject of another corner. In fact, all the little things people must have passed one by one into the control of some speculator.

Gentle criticism of that method of mulcting the public was made in the press that depended more than ever on advertising. But that fell on deaf ears. And usually a man had not to be a deep thinker to realize that the government must permit that sort of thing in order to find money for the prosecution of the war and the administration of the state. To serious complaint, the government would reply that it had done enough by regulating the food, and that further regulation would break down the economic machine. That was true, of course. To take another step was to fall into the arms of the Social Democrats, and that responsibility nobody expected the government to take.

The attitude of the public toward the governmentally decreed system of social economy is not the least interesting feature of it.

The authorities took good care to accompany every new regulation with the explanation that it had to be taken in the interest of the state

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

and the armies in the field. If too much food was consumed in the interior, the men in the trenches would go hungry. That was a good argument, of course. Almost every family had some member of it in the army; that food was indeed scarce was known, and not to be content with what was issued was folly in the individual—at one time it was treason. As an antidote against resentment at high prices, the government had provided the minimum-maximum price schedules, and occasionally some retailer or wholesaler was promptly dealt with by the court, whose president was then more interested in fining the man than in putting him in jail. The government needed the money and was not anxious to feed prisoners. If some favorite was hit by this, the authorities had the convenient excuse that it was “war.”

It is difficult to see how the attitude of the several governments could have been different. The authorities of a state have no other power, strength, and resources than what the community places at their disposal wittingly or unwittingly. The war was here and had to be prosecuted in the best manner possible, and the operations incident to the struggle were so gigantic that every penny and fraction thereof had to be mobilized. There was no way out of this so long as the enemy was to be met and opposed. Even the more conservative faction of the Social Democrats realized that, and for the time being the “internationalist” socialists had no argument they could advance against

THE IRON RATION

this, since elsewhere the "internationalists" had also taken to cover. The Liberals everywhere could demand fair treatment of the masses, but that they had been given by the government to the fullest extent possible under the circumstances. The exploitation of the public was general and no longer confined to any class, though it did not operate in all cases with the same rigor.

To have the laws hit all alike would have meant embracing the very theories of Karl Marx and his followers. Apart from the fact that the middle and upper classes were violently opposed to this, there was the question whether it would have been possible in that case to continue the war. The German, German-Austrian, and Hungarian public, however, wanted the war continued, even when the belt had been tightened to the last hole. What, under these circumstances, could be done by the several governments but extract from their respective people the very last cent? Discussion of the policy was similar to a cat chasing its tail.

We may say the same of the motive actuating the authorities when in the fall of 1916 they established municipal meat markets where meat could be obtained by the poor at cost price and often below that. Whether that was done to alleviate hunger or keep the producer in good trim is a question which each must answer for himself. It all depends on the attitude one takes. The meat was sold by the municipality or the Food Commission direct, at prices from 15 to

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

25 per cent. below the day's quotation, and was a veritable godsend to the poor. Whether the difference in price represented humaneness on the part of the authorities or design would be hard to prove. Those I questioned invariably claimed that it was a kind interest in the masses which caused the government to help them in that manner. Had I been willing to do so I could have shown, of course, that the money spent in this sort of charity had originally been in the pockets of those who bought the cheaper meat.

But that is a chronic ailment of social economy, and I am not idealist enough to say how this ailment could be cured. In fact, I cannot see how it can be cured if society is not to sink into inertia, seeing that the scramble for a living is to most the only leaven that will count. That does not mean, however, that I believe in the maxim, "The devil take the hindmost"—a maxim which governed the distribution of life's necessities in Central Europe during the first two years of the war.

The zonification of the bread, milk, fats, and sugar supply, and the municipal meat markets began to show that either the government had come to fear the public or was now willing to co-operate with it more closely than it had done in the past. At any rate, this new and better policy had a distinctly humane aspect. Some of the food-lines disappeared, and with them departed much of that brutality which food control by the government had been associated with in the past. The food allowance was scant enough,

THE IRON RATION

but a good part of it was now assured. It could be claimed at any time of the day, and that very fact revived in many the self-respect which had suffered greatly by the eternal begging for food in the lines.

Having made a study of the psychology of the food-liner, I can realize what that meant. Of a sudden food riots ceased, and with them passed all danger of a revolution. I am convinced that in the winter of 1915-16 it was easier to start internal trouble in the Central states than it was a year later. A more or less impartial and fairly efficient system of food distribution had induced the majority to look at the shortage in eatables as something for which the government was not to blame. That, after all, was what the government wanted. Whether or no it worked consciously toward that end I am not prepared to say.

By that time, also, the insufferable small official had been curbed to quite an extent. As times grew harder, and the small increases in pay failed more and more to keep pace with the increase in the cost of living, that class became more and more impossible. Toward its superiors it showed more obsequiousness than before, because removal from office meant a stay at the front, and since things in life have the habit of balancing one another, the class became more rude and oppressive toward the public. Finally the government caused the small official to understand that this could not go on. He also learned in a small degree that bureaucratism is not necessarily

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

the only purpose of the officeholder, though much progress in that direction was yet necessary.

It has often been my impression that government in Central Europe would be good if it were possible to put out of their misery the small officials—the element which snarls at the civilian when there is no occasion for it. It seems to me that the worst which the extremists in the Entente group have planned for the Central Powers is still too good for the martinet who holds forth in the Central European *Amtsstube*—*i. e.*, government office. Law and order has no greater admirer than myself, but I resent having some former corporal take it for granted that I had never heard of such things until he happened along. Yet that is precisely what this class does. It has alienated hundreds of thousands of friends of the German people. It has stifled the social enlightenment and political liberty which was so strong in Central Europe in the first four decades of the nineteenth century.

It is not difficult to imagine what that class did to a population which had been reduced to subsisting at the public crib. The bread ticket was handed the applicant with a sort of by-the-grace-of-God mien, when rude words did not accompany it. The slightest contravention brought a flood of verbal abuse. Pilate never was so sure that he alone was right. Between this official insolence, food shortage, and exploitation by the government and its economic minions, the Central European civilian had a merry time of it.

THE IRON RATION

But, after all, no people has a better government than it deserves, just as it has no more food than it produces or is able to secure. The martinets did not mend their ways until women in the food-lines had clawed their faces and an overwhelming avalanche of complaints began to impress the higher officials. Conditions improved rapidly after that and stayed improved so long as the public was heard from. It may not be entirely coincidence that acceptable official manners and better distribution of food came at the same time. In that lies the promise that the days of the autocratic small official in Central Europe are numbered.

It was futile, however, to look for a general or deep-seated resentment against the government itself. Certain officials were hated. Before the war that would have made little difference to the bureaucratic clans, and even now they were often reluctant to sacrifice one of their ilk, but there was no longer any help for it. There was never a time when a change in the principle of government was considered as the means to effect a bettering of conditions. The Central European prefers monarchical to republican government. He is not inclined to do homage to a ruler who is a commoner—a tribute he still pays his government and its head.

In the monarchy the ruler occupies a position which the average republican cannot easily understand. In the constitutional monarchy, having a responsible ministry, the king is generally little better than what is known as a

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

figurehead. He is hardly ever heard from, and when he is the cause of his appearance in the spotlight may be some act that has little or nothing to do with government itself. He may open some hospital or attend a maneuver or review of the fleet, or convene parliament with a speech prepared by the premier, and there his usefulness ends—seemingly. But that is not quite so. In such a realm the monarch stands entirely for that continuation of policy and principle which is necessary for the guidance of the state. He becomes the living embodiment of the constitution, as it were. He is the non-political guardian thereof. Political parties may come and go, but the king stays, seeing to it, theoretically at least, that the parliamentary majority which has put its men into the ministry does not violate the ground laws of the country.

In his capacities of King of Prussia and German Emperor, William II. has been more absolute than any of the other European monarchs, the Czar of Russia alone excepted. The two constitutions under which he rules, the Prussian and the German federative, give him a great deal of room in which to elbow around. When a Reichstag proved intractable he had but to dissolve it, and in the Prussian chambers of Lords and Deputies he was as nearly absolute as any man could be—provided always he did what was agreeable to the Junkers. They are a strong-minded crew in Prussia, and less inclined to be at the beck and call of their king than Germans generally are in the case of their

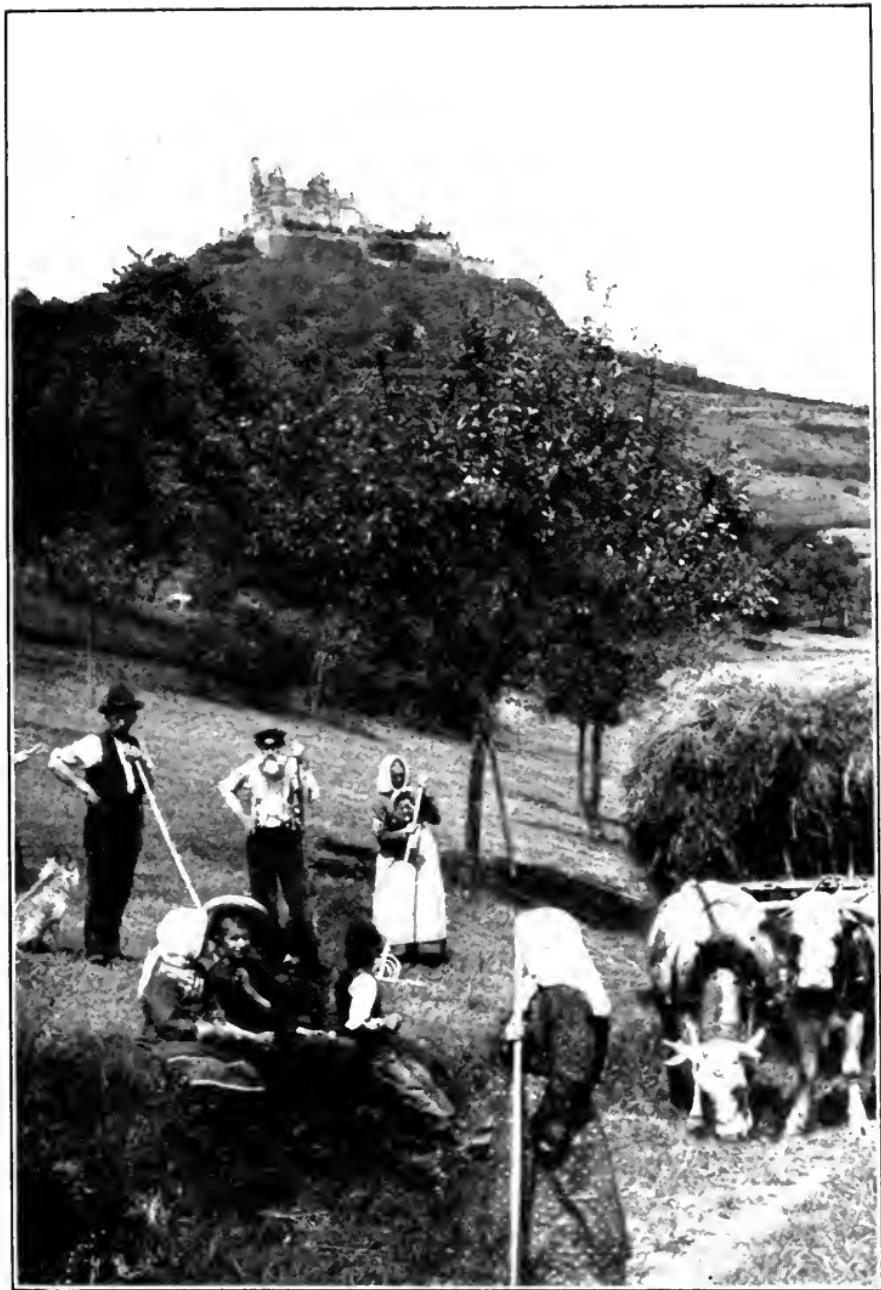
THE IRON RATION

Emperor. In Prussia the King is far more the servant of the state than the Kaiser is in Germany. But this is one of those little idiosyncrasies in government that can be found anywhere.

Three years of contact with all classes of Germans have yet to show me the single individual, not a most radical socialist, who had anything but kind words for the King-Emperor and his family. What the Kaiser had to say went through the multitude like an electric impulse. No matter how uninteresting I might find a statement, because I could not see it from the angle of the German, the public always received it very much as it might the word of a prophet. It was conceded that the Emperor could make mistakes, that, indeed, he had made not a few of them; but this did not by any means lessen the degree of receptiveness of his subjects. Against the word of Kaiser Wilhelm all argument is futile, and will always remain futile.

It was this sentiment which caused the German people to accept with wonderful patience whatever burden the war brought. Had it ever been necessary to cast into the government's war treasury the last pfennig, the mere word from the Kaiser would have accomplished this. What Napoleon was to his soldiers Emperor William II. is to his people.

And then it must not be overlooked that the Emperor possesses marked ability as a press agent. He was always the first to conform to a



Copyright by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

CASTLE HOHENZOLLERN

Ancestral seat of the Hohenzollern dynasty. The men and women in the foreground are good types of Germany's peasantry.



MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

regulation in food. Long before the rich classes had so much as a thought of eating war-bread, Emperor William would tolerate nothing else on his table. The Empress, too, adhered to this. All wheat bread was banished from the several palaces of the imperial *ménage*. Every court function was abandoned, save coffee visits in the afternoon for the friends of the Empress.

I saw the Emperor a good many times. At the beginning of the war he was rushed past me in the Unter den Linden in Berlin. The crowds were cheering him. He seemed supremely happy, as he bowed to right and left in acknowledgment of the fealty voiced. Since I am not so extraordinarily gifted as some claim to be, I could not say that I saw anything in his face but the expression of a man happy to see that his people stood behind him.

Later I saw him in Vienna. He had come to the capital of his ally to view for the last time the face of his dead comrade-in-arms, the late Emperor Francis Joseph. He stepped out of the railroad carriage with a grave face and hastened toward the young Emperor of Austria to express his condolences. The two men embraced each other. I was struck by the apparent sincerity of the greeting. What impressed me more, perhaps, was the alacrity of the older man. For several minutes the two monarchs paced up and down on the station platform and conversed on some serious subject. I noticed especially the quick movements of the German Emperor's head, and the smart manner in which he faced about

THE IRON RATION

when the two had come to the end of the platform.

The streak of white hair, visible between ear and helmet, accentuated in his face that expression which is not rare in old army officers, when the inroads of years have put a damper on youthful martial enthusiasm. The man was still every inch a soldier, and yet his face reminded me of that of Sir Henry Irving, despite the fact that there is little similarity to be seen when pictures of the two men are compared, as I had shortly afterward opportunity of doing. I should say that in civilian clothing I would take the Emperor for a retired merchant-marine captain, in whose house I would expect to find a fairly good library indiscriminately assembled and balanced by much bric-à-brac collected in all parts of the world without much plan or design.

Such a retired sea-dog would be a very human being, I take it. His crews might have ever stood in fear of him, but his familiars would look upon him with the respect that is brought any man who knows that friendship's best promoter is usually a judicious degree of reserve.

That was the picture I gained of the Emperor as he marched up and down the station platform in a Vienna suburb. The same afternoon he was taken over the Ring in an automobile. There was no cheering by the vast throng which had assembled to see the mighty War Lord from the north. The old emperor was dead. The houses were draped in black. Many of the civilians had donned mourning. To the hats that were

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

lifted, Kaiser William bowed with a face that was serious. He was all monarch—King and Emperor.

I can understand why a man of the type of Czar Nicholas should lose his throne in a revolution brought on by the shortage of food and the exploitation incident to war. How a similar fate could overtake a man of the type of William II. is not clear to me. For that he is too ready to act. His adaptiveness is almost proverbial in Germany. I have no doubt that should the impossible really occur in Germany becoming a republic William II. would most likely show up as its first president.

In Germany nothing is really ever popular—the works of poets excluded. For that reason the Emperor is not popular in the sense in which Edward VII. could be popular. But Emperor William II. is a fact to the German, just as life itself is that. For the time being the Emperor is the state to the vast majority, and, incongruous as it may seem at a time when conditions in Germany are making for equipollence between the reactionary and the progressive, there is no doubt that no throne in Europe is more secure than that of the Hohenzollerns.

To understand that one must have measured in Germany the patience and determination of those who bore the burden of the war as imposed by scant rations on the one hand and ever-increasing expenditures in warfare on the other.

Since King Alfonso of Spain is better known than the German crown-prince, I will refer to

THE IRON RATION

him as the ruler whom the latter resembles most. The two men are of about the same build, with the difference in favor of the crown-prince, who is possibly a little taller and slightly better looking in a Teutonic fashion. Both are alike in their unmilitariness. One looks as little the soldier as the other, despite the fact that the interested publics have but rarely the opportunity to see these men in mufti.

After all, that is scant reason for the comparison I have made. The better reason is that both are alike in their attitude toward the public. Alfonso is no more democratic than Frederick, nor would he be more interested in good government.

To my friend Karl H. von Wiegand, most prominent of American correspondents in Berlin, the German crown-prince said on one occasion:

"I regret that not more people will talk to me in the manner you have done. I appreciate frankness, but cannot always get it. The people from whom I expect advice and information make it their business to first find out what I might expect to hear and then talk accordingly. It is very disheartening, but what can I do?"

Those who remember the last act of "*Alt-Heidelberg*" will best understand what the factors are that lead to this. We may pity the mind that looks upon another human being as something infinitely superior because accident suddenly places him in a position of great power. I am not so sure that he who becomes the object of that sort of reverence is not to be pitied more.

MOBILIZING THE PENNIES

Our commiseration is especially due the prince whom the frailties of human flesh cause to thus lose all contact with the real life by accepting *ipso facto* that he is a superior being because others are foolish enough to embrace such a doctrine.

A very interesting story is told in that connection of Emperor Charles of Austria. As heir-apparent he had always been very democratic. In those days he was little more to his brother officers than a comrade, and all of them, acting agreeably to a tradition in the Austro-Hungarian army, addressed him by the familiar *Du*—thou.

After he had become Emperor-King, Charles had occasion to visit the east front, spending some time with the Arz army, at whose headquarters he had stayed often and long while still crown-prince.

The young Emperor detected a chilling reserve among the men with whom he had formerly lived. Some of his comrades addressed him as “Your Majesty.” Charles stood this for a while, and then turned on a young officer with whom he had been on very friendly terms.

“I suppose you must say majesty now, but do me the favor of saying ‘*Du Majestät*.’ I am still in the army; or are you trying to rule me out of it?”

This may be considered a fair sample of the cement that has been keeping the Central states from falling apart under the stress of the war. To us republicans that may seem absurd. And still, who would deny that the memory of

THE IRON RATION

Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln is not a thing that binds together much of what is Americanism? In the republic the great men of the past are done homage, in the monarchy the important man of the hour is the thing. Were it otherwise the monarchy would not be possible. It is this difference which very often makes the republic seem ungrateful as compared with the monarchy. But in the aggregate in which all men are supposedly equal nothing else can be looked for.

We must look to that condition for an answer to the question which the subject treated here has suggested. And, after all, this is half a dozen of one and six of the other. In the end we expect any aggregate to defend its institutions, whether they be republican or monarchical. In the republic the devotion necessary may have its foundation in the desire to preserve liberal institutions, while in the monarchy attunement to the great lodestar, tradition, may be the direct cause of patriotism. In England, the ideal monarchy, we have a mixture of both tendencies, and who would say that the mixture, from the British national point of view, has been a bad one?

XII

SHORTAGE SUPREME

A HUNDRED and twelve million people in Central Europe were thinking in terms of shortage as they approached the winter of 1916-17. Government and press said daily that relief would come. The public was advised to be patient another day, another week, another month. All would be well if patience was exercised. That patience was exercised, but in the mind of the populace the shortage assumed proportions that were at times hard to understand.

The ancestors of Emperor Francis Joseph had been buried in a rather peculiar manner. From the body were taken the brain, heart, and viscera in order to make embalming possible. The heart was then put away in a silver vessel, while the other parts were placed in a copper urn. In the funeral processions these containers were carried in a vehicle following the imperial hearse.

The funeral cortège of Francis Joseph was without that vehicle. The old man had requested that he be buried without the dissection that had been necessary in other instances. That being the case, the vehicle was not needed.

THE IRON RATION

But its absence was misinterpreted by the populace. It gave rise to the belief that the copper for the urn could not be spared, seeing that the army needed all of that metal. That little copper would have been required to fashion the urn does not seem to have occurred to them. It was enough to know that the church bells had been melted down and that in the entire country there was not a copper roof left.

The phantom of shortage waxed when it became known that the lack of the necessary chemicals had led to the embalming of the Emperor's body with a fluid which had so discolored the body and face that the coffin had to be closed during the lying-in-state of the dead ruler. It grew again when it became known that, owing to a lack of horses, many changes had to be made in the funeral arrangements, and that most of the pomp of the Spanish court etiquette of funerals would have to be abandoned. What had anciently been a most imposing ceremony became in the end a very quiet affair. With one half of the world at war with the other half, there was a dearth even in monarchs, nobility, and diplomatists to attend the funeral.

Somehow I gained the impression that the word "Want" was written even on the plain coffin which they lifted upon the catafalque in St. Stefan's Cathedral in Vienna, twenty feet away from me. To get into the church I had passed through a throng that showed want and deprivation in clothing and mien. It was a chilly day. Through the narrow streets leading

SHORTAGE SUPREME

to the small square in which the cathedral stands a raw wind was blowing, and I remember well how the one bright spot in that dreary picture was the tall spire of the cathedral upon which fell the light of the setting winter sun. The narrow streets and little square lay in the gloom that fitted the occasion. The shadow of death seemed to have fallen on everything—upon all except the large white cross which presently moved up the central aisle. Under the pall which the cross divided into four black fields lay the remains of the unhappiest of men. His last days had been made bitter by his people's cry for bread.

Since coal was scarce, the church had not been heated. But that night, as if in honor of the funeral guests, a few more lights burned on the principal thoroughfares of Vienna. Even that was reckless extravagance under the circumstances.

Hundreds of thousands of women and children were sitting in cold rooms at that time. The coal-lines brought usually disappointment, but no fuel. Even the hospitals to which many of these unfortunates had to be taken found it difficult to get what coal they needed. The street-car service had been curtailed to such an extent that many were unable to reach their place of work. In Austria that was especially the fault of the Stürgkh régime, whose mad career in burning the candle at both ends the dead emperor had failed to check.

To keep certain neighbors good-natured and

THE IRON RATION

get from them such foods as they could spare, the Central states of Europe had in 1916 exported roughly three million two hundred thousands tons of coal. Another million tons had been shipped into the territories occupied by the Centralist troops. This was no great coal business, of course, especially when we come to consider that some of this fuel came from Belgium. But the four million tons could have been used at home without a lump going begging. When Christmas came coal was as scarce in Germany, Austria, and Hungary as was food. And that is saying a great deal.

Much economy had been already practised during the summer. "Summer time" meant the saving each day of one hour's consumption of fuel in city traction and lighting street, house, and shop. The saving was not great, when compared with the fuel a population of roundly one hundred and twelve millions will consume when given a free hand. But it was something, anyway.

That something was an easement of conditions in the coal market during the summer months. It did not make available for the cold season so much as a shovelful of coal. Whatever the mines put out was carted off there and then. When winter came the bunkers were empty.

The prospect of having to bear with an ever-craving stomach the discomforts of the cold and poorly lighted rooms was not pleasant.

The government saw this and tried a little belated regulation.

SHORTAGE SUPREME

I say belated regulation because the measures came too late to have much value. That there would be a shortage in coal had been foreseen. Nothing could be done, however, to ward off the *Knappheit*.

Among my many acquaintances is the owner of several coal-mines in Austrian Silesia. His handicaps were typical of what every mine-operator had to contend with.

"The coal is there, of course," he would say. "But how am I to get it out? My best miners are at the front. Coal-mining may be done only by men who are physically the fittest. That is the very class of man the government needs at the front. I am trying to come somewhere near my normal output with men that are long past the age when they can produce what is expected of the average miner.

"It can't be done, of course.

"Women are no good underground. So I have tried Russian prisoners-of-war. I went to a prison camp and picked out seventy-five of the most likely chaps. I made willingness to work in a mine one of the conditions of their furlough. They all were willing—so long as they did not know what the work was. Right there the willingness of half the crew ended. I sent them back and tried my luck with the rest.

"To get some work out of the men, I made arrangements with the government that I was to pay them four-fifths of the regular scale. It isn't a question of money. It's a question of getting at the coal. To make a long story short:

THE IRON RATION

Out of the seventy-five Russians seventeen have qualified. I can't afford to repeat the experiment, for the reason that apprentices litter up the works and interfere with the few miners I have left."

The man was short then nearly two hundred workers at the mine shafts. He had underground most of his surface hands. With overtime and some other makeshifts he was able to produce about four-fifths of his normal output. The demand for fuel was such that he would have been able to sell twice as much coal as formerly.

Natural resources mean nothing to a state so long as they cannot be made available. This was the case with Central Europe.

More economy, more restrictions. Industries not contributing directly to the military strength of the Central Powers were ordered to discontinue all night work and overtime. Shops, cafés, hotels, restaurants, and other public places had to limit the consumption of fuel for heating and lighting purposes to one-third their usual quota. The lighting of shop-windows was cut down to almost nothing. Stores had to close at seven o'clock, eating- and drinking-places first at twelve and later at eleven. No light was to be used in the hotels after twelve. All unnecessary heating was prohibited, and the warm-water period in hotels shrank from four to two hours per day. On each stretch of corridor and at each stair-landing or elevator door one small light was allowed.

In Vienna all places of amusement "not con-

SHORTAGE SUPREME

tributing to the cultivation of art for art's sake" were closed. This hit the cheaper theaters and every moving-picture house.

A city of such restrictions would need no street lights at any time. But up to eleven o'clock two lights for each block were allowed. After that Stygian black reigned. Street traction ceased on some lines at eight o'clock; on all lines at nine, though arrangements were made for a few cars to run when the playing theaters closed.

But the regulations came near spilling the baby with the bath. They were well meant, but poorly considered. Economic waste came from them.

The several governments did their very best to get coal to the consumers. In Vienna, for instance, Emperor Charles took a personal interest in the matter. He issued an order that as many miners as possible be returned immediately from the front. For the workers at the mines, who had been living none too well so far as food went, he prescribed the subsistence given the men in the trenches and placed military commissaries in charge of the kitchens. Men from the military railroad organizations were given the running of coal-trains. For certain hours each day the passenger service of the city street traction systems was suspended in favor of the coal traffic, which often gave rise to the unusual sight of seeing an electric street-car drag behind it, over the pavement, from three to five ordinary coal-wagons, which later were towed to their destination by army tractors.

THE IRON RATION

It was a herculean labor that would have to be done in a few days, if a part of the population were not to perish in the cold spell that had come over Central Europe. The work of a whole summer was now to be done in a few days.

From the front came whole columns of army motor trucks. These took a hand at coal distribution. And finally Emperor Charles gave over to the work every horse in the imperial stables.

I will never forget the sight of the imperial coachmen in their yellow-and-black uniforms hauling coal all over Vienna. Their cockaded top-hats looked out of place on the coal-wagons, though no more so than the fine black and silver-adorned harness of the full-blooded horses that drew the wagons.

The press was freer now. Political censorship had been reduced to a minimum. Criticism changed with valuable tips, and one of them was that the government had done a very foolish thing in closing the *Kinos*—movies. It was pointed out that their closing resulted in so small a saving of fuel for heating and lighting that, compared with the wasteful result of the regulation, it stood as one to hundreds.

Such was the case. The men, women, and families who had formerly spent their evenings in the movies were now obliged to frequent the more expensive cafés or sit home and use light and fuel. Some man with a statistical mind figured out that the closing of a movie seating five hundred people and giving two performances

SHOR TAGE SUPREME

in the evening, meant an increase in fuel consumption for heating and lighting purposes sixty times greater than what the movie used.

That was simple enough, and a few days later the movies and cheap theaters resumed business. More than that followed. The government decided that this was a fine method of co-operation. It gave the cafés permission to use more fuel and light in return for a more liberal treatment of patrons not able to spend much money. In harmony with this policy the passenger service of the car lines was extended first to nine and later to ten o'clock, so that people were not obliged to spend every evening in the same café or other public place.

The case was a fine example of co-operation between government and public, with the press as the medium of thought exchange. A twelve-month before, the reaching of such an understanding would have been next to impossible. The editor who then mastered the courage of criticizing a government measure had the suspension of his paper before his eyes. He no longer had to fear this. The result was a clearing of the political atmosphere. Government and people were in touch with one another for the first time in two years.

For over a year all effort of the upper classes had lain fallow. The women who had done their utmost at the beginning of the war had not met enough encouragement to keep their labor up. It had been found, moreover, that charity concerts and teas "an' sich" were of little value

THE IRON RATION

in times when everything had to be done on the largest of scales. What good could come from collecting a few thousand marks or crowns, when not money, but food, was the thing?

The fuel conjunction offered new opportunities. Free musical recitals, concerts, theatrical performances, and lectures were arranged for in order that thousands might be attracted away from their homes and thus be prevented from using coal and light.

One of the leaders in this movement in Vienna was Princess Alexandrine Windisch-Graetz.

The lady is either the owner or the lessee of the Urania Theater. In the past she had financed at her house free performances and lectures for the people in order that they might not be without recreation. A washed face and clean collar were the admission fee. Under her auspices many such institutions sprang up within a few weeks.

"We are saving coal and educating the masses at the same time," she would say to me. "There are times when making a virtue of necessity has its rewards."

And rewards the scheme did have. Lectures on any conceivable subject could be heard, and I was glad to notice that not a single one dealt with the war. The public was tired of this subject and the promoters of the lectures were no less so.

Those whom lectures did not attract could go to the free concerts, and, when the cheaper music palled, payment of twelve cents American

SHORTAGE SUPREME

brought within reach the best Vienna has to offer in symphony and chamber music.

At the same time "warming"-rooms were established in many cities. These were for unattached women and the wives of men at the front. Care was taken to have these places as cozy as circumstances permitted. Entertainment was provided. Much of it took the form of timely lectures on food conservation, care of the children, and related topics. Many of the women heard for the first time in their lives that there were more than two ways of cooking potatoes, and other manners of putting baby to sleep than addling its brain by rocking it in a cradle or perambulator.

I must say that this solution of the coal problem was an unqualified success.

The well-to-do also felt the pinch. Money no longer bought much of anything. The word "wealth" had lost most of its meaning. In the open food market it might buy an overlooked can of genuine Russian caviar or some real *pâté de foie gras*, and if one could trust one's servants and was willing to descend to illicit trading with some hoarding dealer, some extra food could be had that way. In most other aspects of subsistence rich and poor, aristocrat and commoner, fared very much alike. But I cannot say that this "democracy of want" was relished by the upper classes.

By this time every automobile had been requisitioned by the government. That was painful, but bearable so long as taxis could be had. Of a

THE IRON RATION

sudden it was found that most of the taxicabs were being hired by the day and week, often months, by those who could afford it. That was contrary to the purpose for which the government had left the machines in town. They were intended mainly to take officers and the public from the railroad stations to the hotels, and *vice versa*. As an aid to shopping they had not been considered, nor had it been borne in mind that some war purveyor's family would wish to take the air in the park by being wheeled through it. Regulation descended swiftly.

Hereafter taxicab-drivers could wait for a passenger five minutes if the trip from starting-point to destination had to be interrupted. If the passenger thought it would take him longer he was obliged to pay his fare and dismiss the taxi. Policemen had orders to arrest any taxi-driver who violated this rule; and since the two do not seem to get along well together anywhere, there was much paying of fines.

Regulation being still somewhat piecemeal, the hacks had been overlooked. Those who had to have wheel transportation at their beck and call hired these now by the day and week. Another order came. The hack-driver could wait in front of a store or any place ten minutes and then he had to take another "fare."

The upper classes had retained their fine equipages, of course. The trouble was that the government had taken away every horse and had even deprived the wheels of their rubber tires. With taxis and hacks not to be had, es-

SHORTAGE SUPREME

pecially when the government ruled later that they could be used between railroad stations only, and not to points, even in that case, that could be reached with the street-cars, social life of the higher order took a fearful slump. Though a season of very quiet dressing was at hand, one could not go calling in the evening in the habiliment impervious to rain. Simple luncheons and teas were the best that society could manage under the circumstances.

The theater remained a little more accessible. Street-cars were provided to take the spectators home. With the show over, everybody made a wild scramble for the cars. Central Europe was having democracy forced down its throat. The holder of a box at the Royal Opera had indeed abandoned the evening dress and *chapeau claque*. His lady had followed his example in a half-hearted manner. But all this did not make the ride home easier. The gallery angel in Central Europe is well-behaved and not inclined to be conspicuous or forward. But he takes up room, and one was elbowed by him. When soap was scarce he also was not always washed all over, and that made a difference.

But the theaters did a fine business, for all that. The better institutions were sold out three weeks ahead, and the cheaper shows were crowded by the overflow.

Admission to the theater was the one thing that had not gone up in price very much. The artists had agreed to work for a little less, and those to whom royalties were due had acted in

THE IRON RATION

a like public spirit. Managers were content with being allowed to run on about a 5-per-cent.-profit basis. I suppose they thought that half a loaf was better than none. There would have been none had they gone up in their prices.

The performances were up to standard. A great deal of Shakespeare was being given. Two of the Vienna theaters played Shakespeare twice a week, and at Berlin as many as three houses had a Shakespearian program. Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw plays were occasionally given and also some by the older French playwrights. Modern French authors seemed to be taboo. No changes were made in the play-lists of the operas, nor was prejudice manifested on the concert programs. All performances were in German, however—Hungarian in Budapest. In other parts of the Dual Monarchy they were given in the language of the district; Italian, for instance, in Trieste, where I heard a late Italian *opéra comique* just imported *via* Switzerland.

The stage was not fallow by any means during the war. In Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest it was a poor week that did not have its two or three *premières*. It is rather odd that nobody wrote plays about the war. Of some twoscore new plays I saw in three years not a single one occupied itself with a theme related to the struggle that was going on. It seemed, too, that the playwrights had turned their attention to psychological study. One of these efforts was a phenomenal success. I refer to Franz Molnar's "*Fasching*."

SHORTAGE SUPREME

About twenty new "Viennese" operas made their *début* during the war. Just two of them touched upon the thing that was uppermost in the mind of man. The others dealt with the good old days of long ago; the happy days of our great-grandfathers, when soldiers still wore green uniforms with broad lapels of scarlet and lapped-over swallowtails that showed the same color; when soldiers carried a most murderous-looking sidearm on "clayed" leather sashes hung rakishly over the shoulder. How happy those fellows looked as they blew imaginary foam from their empty steins in front of the inn!

Ten operas were turned out in the three years. I give credit for much vitality to only one of them. It is known as "*Der Heiland*"—"The Saviour." It was voted the one addition to lasting music.

With concert-composers also busy, there was no dearth of musical enjoyment. The art world did yeoman service to keep the population from going insane. As to that there can be no doubt. It was fortunate that the Central European public can find so much mental nourishment in the theater and concert-hall. Otherwise there would have been a lack of room in the asylums for the insane.

Society, however, did not go to sleep entirely. The luncheons were simple repasts, but lasted all the longer. Usually one left in time to reach tea somewhere else. For dinner only the closest friends of the family were invited, and when others had to be entertained in that manner

THE IRON RATION

there was the hotel. Balls and similar frivolities were under the ban, of course.

After listening all day long to what the people in the caf  s and restaurants had to say of the war, it was really refreshing to hear what the aristocrats thought. Most of them were severely objective in their opinions, some verged on neutrality, and a small number took the tragedy of the war to heart.

Among the latter was a princess related to Emperor Francis Joseph by marriage. She was a motherly old woman. The very thought of warfare was unwelcome to her. She had one expression for what she thought of the calamity:

“Civilization has declared itself bankrupt in this war.”

What she meant was that a civilization that could lead to such a catastrophe had shown itself futile. She was plain-spoken for one of her station, and the American ambassador at Vienna was her *b  te noire*. This will suffice to identify the lady to all whom her identity could interest.

Much of the food shortage was laid at the door of the United States government. Why didn’t the American government see to it that the Central states civilian populations received that to which international law and the recent The Hague and London conventions entitled them?

I was asked that question a thousand times every week. With the male questioners I could argue the point, but with the ladies . . . it was another matter. As many as ten at a time have nailed me down to that question. At

SHORTAGE SUPREME

first that used to ruin many a day for me, but finally one gets used to anything.

The question was not so easily answered in Central Europe. The best reply was that I was not running anything aside from myself, in which I followed the ways of the diplomatist who is never responsible for the acts of his government so long as he wishes to remain *persona grata*.

On the whole, Central European society was leading a rather colorless life when the war was three years old. Even their charity work had no longer much of a sphere. It was still possible to collect money by means of concerts, teas, and receptions—bazaars had to be abandoned because everybody had tired of them—but there was so little that money could buy. Government control had gradually spread over everything, and, with everybody working hard, nobody needed much assistance, as everybody thought. That was not the case by any means, but such was largely the popular impression.

The truth was that everybody was tired of working at the same old charities. The shortage of fuel gave a new opportunity, but did not occupy many. It was one thing to pin a paper rosette to a lapel in return for an offering willingly made, and quite another to preside over a co-operative dining-room or a place where the women and children could warm themselves and pass the time with pleasure and profit to themselves. Not many were equal to that. Few had the necessary experience.

The worst of it was that travel to the inter-

THE IRON RATION

national summer and winter resorts was out of the question. And to move about in one's own country meant passes, visées, authorizations, health certificates, documents attesting good conduct and a clean slate with the police; and if by chance the trip should take one into an inner or outer war zone, the home authorities had to go on record as having established that he or she was not plagued by insects. It is remarkable what the Central governments would do in the interest of law and order, public security, and sanitation. But it was more remarkable that the highest nobility had to conform to the same rules. The only persons who had the right to sidestep any of these multifarious regulations were officers and soldiers whose military credentials answered every purpose. Since I traveled only on *Offene Order*—open order—the marching order of the officer, I was one of the few civilians exempt from this annoyance.

That and the state of the railroads kept the upper classes at home. Many of them were thus afforded their first good chance to know where they lived.

Shortage had even come to rule the day for the aristocrats. It was a bitter pill for them, but I will say that they swallowed it without batting an eye.

XIII

“GIVE US BREAD!”

THE food situation in Central Europe became really desperate in the third year of the war. The year's wheat crop had been short in quantity and quality. Its nutritive value was about 55 per cent. of normal. The rye crop was better, but not large enough to meet the shortage in breadstuffs caused by the poor wheat yield. Barley was fair under the circumstances. Oats were a success in many parts of Germany, but fell very low in Austria and Hungary. The potato crop was a failure. The supply of peas and beans had been augmented by garden culture, but most people held what they had raised and but little of the crop reached the large population centers. To make things worse, the Hungarian Indian corn crop was very indifferent. Great losses were sustained when the Roumanian army in September and October overran much of Transylvania, drove off some twenty thousand head of cattle, and slaughtered about fifty thousand pigs. Large quantities of cereals were also ruined by them, as I was able to ascertain on my trips to the Roumanian front.

THE IRON RATION

Up to this time the war-bread of the Central states had been rather palatable, though a steady loss in quality had been noticeable. Soon it came to pass that the ration of bread had to be reduced to about one-quarter of a pound per day. And the dough it was made of was no longer good.

The 55-25-20 war-bread was good to eat and very nutritious. The stuff now passing for bread was anything but that, so far as Austria was concerned. Its quality fluctuated from one week to another. I was unable to keep track of it. Indian corn was already used in the loaf, and before long ground clover hay was to form one of its constituents. Worst of all, the bread was not always to be had. At the beginning of November the three slices of bread into which the ration was divided, as a rule, fell to two, so that the daily allowance of bread was not quite four ounces. On one occasion Vienna had hardly any bread for four days.

In Hungary conditions were a little better, for the reason that the Hungarian government had closed the border against wheat and cereal exports. But the large population centers were also poorly provided with flour.

Germany, on the other hand, was better off than either Austria or Hungary. The rye crop had been fairly good, and food regulation was further advanced there. It was, in fact, close to the point of being perfect. But the quantity allotted the individual was inadequate, of course.

Throughout Central Europe the cry was heard:

“GIVE US BREAD!”

“Give us bread!”

So far the several populations had borne all hardships in patience and stoical indifference. The limit of endurance was reached, however. Colder weather called for a greater number of calories to heat the body. The vegetable season was over. The hoardings of the poorer classes had been eaten up. The cattle were no longer on pasture, and, fed with hay only, gave now less milk than ever.

It was a mournful season.

All food was now regulated. While there had been no meat cards in Austria and Hungary as yet, there were two, and at times three, meatless days; though when on three days no beef, veal, or pork could be eaten, it was permitted to consume mutton and fowl on one of them.

But the consumption of meat regulated itself, as it were. Meat has always been proportionately expensive in Central Europe, and but a small percentage of people ever ate it more than once a day. The majority, in fact, ate meat only three times a week, as was especially the case in the rural districts, where fresh meat was eaten only on Sundays. There was no inherent craving for this food, on this account, and beef at seventy cents American a pound was something that few could afford.

Animal fat had in the past taken the place of meat. In the summer not much was needed of this, for the reason that the warm weather called for less body heat, to supply which is the special mission of fats. But with clothing worn

THE IRON RATION

thin, shoes leaking, and rooms poorly heated, the demand for heat-producing food grew apace.

This was reflected by the longer potato-lines.

On one occasion I occupied myself with a potato-line in the Second Municipal District of Vienna. It was ten o'clock in the morning. Distribution was going on. Those then served had been standing in that line since six o'clock. The first who had received their quota of the eight pounds of potatoes, which was to last for three days, had appeared in front of the shop at three o'clock in the morning. It had rained most of that time and a cold wind was blowing.

I engaged one of the women in conversation.

She had arrived at the store at about seven o'clock. There were three children she had to take care of. She had given them a breakfast of coffee and bread for the oldest, and milk for the two others.

"I have nobody with whom I could leave the children," she said. "My neighbors also have to stand in the food-line. So I keep them from the stove by placing the table on its side in front of it. Against one end of the table I move the couch. The children can't move that, and against the other end I push my dresser."

It appears that the woman had come home once from the food-line and had found her rooms on the verge of going up in a blaze. One of the children had opened the door of the stove and the live coals had fallen out. They had set fire to some kindlings and a chair. The children thought that great fun.

"GIVE US BREAD!"

I complimented the woman on her resourcefulness.

Her husband, a Bohemian, was then at the front in Galicia. For the support of the family the woman received from the government monthly for herself 60 crowns (\$12) and for each child 30 crowns, making a total of 150, of which amount she paid 48 crowns for rent every month. I could not see how, with prevailing prices, she managed to keep herself alive. Coal just then was from 3 to 5 crowns per hundredweight (\$12 to \$20 per ton), and with only one stove going the woman needed at least five hundred pounds of coal a month. After that, food and a little clothing had to be provided. How did she manage it?

"During the summer I worked in an ammunition factory near here," she said. "I earned about twenty-six crowns a week, and some of the money I was able to save. I am using that now. I really don't know what I am going to do when it is gone. There is work enough to be had. But what is to become of the children? To get food for them I must stand in line here and waste half of my time every day."

The line moved very slowly, I noticed. I concluded that the woman would get her potatoes in about an hour, if by that time there were any left.

Since I used to meet the same people in the same lines, I was able to keep myself informed on what food conditions were from one week to another. They were gradually growing worse.

THE IRON RATION

Now and then no bread could be had, and the potatoes were often bad or frozen.

The cry for food became louder, although it was not heard in the hotels and restaurants where I ate. My waiters undertook to supply me with all the bread I wanted, card or no card—but who would eat the concoction they were serving? I was able to buy all the meat I needed and generally ate no other flour products than those in the pastry and puddings.

It was a peculiar experience, then, to eat in a well-appointed dining-room of supplies that were rather plentiful because the poor, who really needed those things, could not afford to buy them. The patrons of the place would come in, produce such cards as they had to have, and then order as before, with all the cares left to the management—which cares were comparatively slight, seeing that the establishment dealt with wholesalers and usually did much of its buying clandestinely.

Somewhere the less fortunate were eating what the luck of the food-line had brought that day, which might be nothing for those who had come late and had no neighbors who would lend a little bread and a few potatoes. Suicides and crime, due to lack of food, increased alarmingly.

There was a shocking gauntness about the food-lines. Every face showed want. The eyes under the threadbare shawls cried for bread. But how could that bread be had? It simply was not there. And such things as a few ounces of fats and a few eggs every week meant very little in the end.

"GIVE US BREAD!"

Perhaps it was just as well that those in the food-lines did not know that a large number of co-citizens were yet living in plenty. There were some who feared that such knowledge might lead to riots of a serious nature. But I had come to understand the food-lines and their psychology better. With the men home, trouble might have come—could not have been averted, in fact. But the women besieging the food-shops were timid and far from hysterical. Most of them were more concerned with the welfare of their children than with their own troubles, as I had many an occasion to learn. Not a few of them sold their bodies to get money enough to feed their offspring. Others pawned or sold the last thing of value they had. The necessity of obtaining food at any price was such that many a "business" hoard entered the channels of illicit trade and exacted from the unfortunate poor the very last thing they had to give. The price of a pound of flour or some fat would in some cases be 800 per cent. of what these things normally cost.

The several governments were not ignorant of these things. But for a while they were powerless, though now they had abandoned largely their policy of "mobilizing" the pennies of the poor. To apply the law to every violator of the food regulations was quite impossible. There were not jails enough to hold a tenth of them, and a law that cannot be equitably enforced should not be enforced at all. The very fact that its enforcement is impossible shows that it is contrary to the interest of the social aggregate.

THE IRON RATION

In Germany a fine disregard for social station and wealth had marked almost every food-regulation decree of the government from the very first. The several state governments were concerned with keeping their civil population in as good a physical condition as the food situation permitted. The financial needs of the government had to be considered, but it was forever the object to make the ration of the poor as good as possible, and to do that meant that he or she who had in the past lived on the fat of the land would now have to be content with less. As the war dragged on, pauper and millionaire received the same quantity of food. If the latter was minded to eat that from expensive porcelain he could do so, nor did anybody mind if he drank champagne with it, for in doing so he did not diminish unnecessarily the natural resources of the nation.

Food regulation in Austria had been less efficacious. In Hungary it was little short of being a farce. In both countries special privilege is still enthroned so high that even the exigencies of the war did not assail it until much damage had been done.

It was not until toward the end of December that the two governments proceeded vigorously to attack the terrible mixture of food shortage and chaotic regulation that confronted them.

The new ruler of the Dual Monarchy, Emperor-King Charles, was responsible for the change.

While Emperor Francis Joseph lived, the heir-apparent had not occupied much of a place in

"GIVE US BREAD!"

government. The camarilla surrounding the old man saw to that. But by depriving the young archduke of his rightful place, which the incapacity of the Emperor should have assigned him, the court clique gave him the very opportunities he needed to understand the food situation he was to cope with presently—had to cope with if he wanted to see the government continued.

The removal of Premier Stürgkh by the hand of the assassin had been timely; the death of Francis Joseph was timelier yet. The old monarch had ceased to live in the times that were. He came from an age which is as much related to our era as is the rule of the original patriarch, one Abraham of Chaldea. Food conditions might be brought to his attention, but the effort served no purpose. The old man was incapable of understanding why the interests of the privileged classes should be sacrificed for the sake of the many.

At the several fronts, at points of troop concentration, and in the very food-lines, the young Emperor had heard and seen what the ailments and shortcomings of public subsistence were. One of the first things he did when he came into power was to take a keen and active interest in food questions. For one thing, he decided to regulate consumption downward. It was a great shock to the privileged class when it heard that the Emperor would cut down the supply of those on top in order that more be left for those beneath.

THE IRON RATION

To do that was not easy, however. The young man thought of the force of example. He prohibited the eating at court of any meals not in accord with the food regulations. Wheat bread and rolls were banished. Every servant not actually needed was dismissed so that he might do some useful work. Several of the imperial and royal establishments were closed altogether. The *ménage* at Castle Schönbrunn was disbanded. The personnel of the Hofburg in Vienna was reduced to actual needs. It was ordered that only one suite in the palace be lighted and heated—a very simple apartment which the Emperor and his family occupied.

Some very amusing stories are told in connection with the policy the Emperor had decided to apply. I will give here a few of them—those I have been able to verify or which for some other reason I may not doubt.

They had been leading a rather easy life at the Austro-Hungarian general headquarters. The chief of staff, Field-Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorff, was rather indulgent with his subordinates, and had never discouraged certain extravagances the officers of the establishment were fond of. One of them was to have wheat dinner-rolls.

A few days after the new Emperor's ascension of the Austrian throne he happened to be at Baden, near Vienna, which was then the seat of the general headquarters. After a conference he intimated that he would stay for dinner at the general mess of the staff. That was a great

“GIVE US BREAD!”

honor, of course, though formerly the influence of the archducal party had made the heir-apparent more tolerated than respected in that very group.

After a round of introductions Emperor Charles sat down at the head of the table. On each napkin lay a roll and in a basket there were more. The Emperor laid his roll to one side and ate the soup without any bread. When the next dish was being served, and those at table had made good inroads upon their rolls, the Emperor called the orderly.

“You may bring me a slice of war-bread, and mind you I do not want a whole loaf, but just the third of a daily ration, such as the law entitles me to. No more, no less!”

Some of the officers almost choked on the morsel of wheat roll they were about to swallow. The Emperor said no more, however, and his conversation continued with all the *bonhomie* for which he is known. But henceforth no more wheat bread in any form was to be seen in any officers’ mess. A few days later came an order from the civil authorities that all patrons of hotels and restaurants were to bring their bread, issued to them in the morning, to their meals if they were not to go without it. The eating-house manager who gave bread to patrons would be fined heavily once or twice and after that would lose his license to do business.

A few days after that I saw a rather interesting thing in the cloak-room of the Court Opera. A well-dressed couple came in. The lady was attired in quite the latest thing made by some

THE IRON RATION

able *couturier*, and the man was in evening dress, a rare sight nowadays. As he pushed his fur coat across the counter a small white parcel fell to the floor. The paper wrapping parted and two slices of very black war-bread rolled among the feet of the throng.

"There goes our supper bread!" cried the woman.

"So it seems," remarked the man. "But what is the use of picking it up now? It's been rolling about on the floor."

"But somebody can still eat it," said the woman.

Just then two men handed back the bread. Its owner wrapped it up again and put the parcel into a pocket. I suppose the servants of the household ate next day more bread than usual.

Shortly after that I had tea at the residence of Mrs. Penfield, wife of the American ambassador at Vienna. Among other guests was a princess of the house of Parma. There are several such princesses and I have forgotten which one it was, nor could I say whether she was a sister or a cousin of Empress Zita.

At any rate, the young woman had a son of an age when good milk is the best food. She said that the recent regulations of the government were such that not even she could transgress upon them, though that does not seem to have been her intention.

How to get enough milk for her boy was a great problem, or had been. The problem had on that very day been solved by her, however.

“GIVE US BREAD!”

“I bought a good cow two weeks ago,” said the princess.

“That was certainly the best way of getting good milk,” commented the American ambassador.

“Yes, it was,” remarked the Princess Parma. “But it did not end my troubles. I had the milk shipped here, and found that the food authorities would not allow it to be delivered to me, except that portion which the law prescribes for children and adults. That much I got. The remainder was turned over to the Food Central, and I got a letter saying that I would be paid for the milk at the end of the month.”

“But the allowance is too small, your Highness,” suggested somebody, sympathetically.

“That is the trouble, of course,” returned the princess. “It is too small for a growing child. But what could I do? The authorities say that the law is the law. I spoke to the Emperor about it. He says that he is not the government and has nothing to do with it. Nor can he intercede for me, he says, because he does not want to set a bad example.”

“Then the buying of the cow did not solve the problem,” I ventured to remark. “The solution is only a partial one, your Highness!”

The princess smiled in the manner of those who are satisfied with something they have done.

“The problem is solved, monsieur!” she said. “This morning I shipped my boy to where the cow is.”

There was no longer any doubt that food regu-

THE IRON RATION

lation was on in real earnest. When a woman allied to the imperial house was unable to get for her child more milk than some other mother could get, things were indeed on the plane of equity. That every person should thereafter get his or her share of the available store of bread is almost an unnecessary statement.

The Austrian civil authorities had not made a good job of food administration. They were too fond of the normal socio-economic institutions to do what under the circumstances had to be done, and were forever afraid that they would adopt some measure that might bring down the entire economic structure. And that fear was not unwarranted, by any means. The drain of the war had sapped the vitality of the state. Though Austria was for the time being a dead tree, the civil administrators thought that a dead tree was still better upright than prostrate.

Emperor Charles had surrounded himself with young men, who were enterprising, rather than attached to the interests of the privileged. Among them was a man known as the "Red Prince." It was not the color of hair that gave this name to Prince Alois Lichtenstein. Odd as it may sound, this scion of one of the most prominent families in Europe is an ardent socialist in theory and to some extent in practice, though not anxious to be known as one. He holds that the chief promoters of socialism the world over are professional politicians who have seized upon a very valuable socio-economic idea for the pur-

"GIVE US BREAD!"

pose of personal promotion, and that under these circumstances he cannot support them.

His influence with the new Emperor was great, and led to a rather "unsocialist" result —the appointment of a military food-dictator, General Höfer, a member of the Austro-Hungarian general staff.

It was argued that equity in food distribution could be effected only by placing it in charge of a man who would treat all classes of the population as the drill-sergeant does his men. The military food-dictator had no favors to grant and none to expect. General Höfer acted on this principle, and despite the fact that he was handicapped by a top-heavy regulation machine and a shortage in all food essentials, he was shortly able to do for Austria what Dr. Karl Helfferich had done for Germany.

In speaking here particularly of Austrian regulations when the crisis came I have a special objective. I am able to give in this manner a better picture of what was done throughout Central Europe. The necessity for a certain step in food regulation and the *modus operandi* move in a narrower sphere. In Germany the situation had been met more or less as its phases developed; in Austria and Hungary this had not been done. There had been much neglect, with the result that all problems were permitted to reach that concrete form which extremity was bound to give them. So many threads had been pulled from the socio-economic fabric that holes could be seen, while the Germans had

THE IRON RATION

always managed in time to prevent more than the thinness of the thing showing.

The profit system of distribution manages to overlook the actual time-and-place values of commodities. Under it things are not sold where and when they are most needed, but where and when they will give the largest profit. That the two conditions referred to are closely related must be admitted, since supply and demand are involved. But the profit-maker is ever more interested in promoting demand than he is in easing supply. He must see to it that the consumer is as eager to buy as the farmer is anxious to sell, if business is to be good. This state of affairs has its shortcomings even in time of peace. What it was to be in war I have sufficiently shown already.

The regulations to which the food crisis of the fall of 1916 gave justification laid the ax to the middleman system of distribution. The several governments empowered their Food Commissions and Centrals to establish short-cuts from farm to kitchen that were entirely in the hands of the authorities. Though the Purchasing Central was even then not unknown, it came now to supplant the middleman entirely.

The grain was bought from the farmer and turned over to the mills, where it was converted into flour at a fixed price. The miller was no longer able to buy grain for the purpose of holding the flour afterward until some commission-man or wholesaler made him a good offer. He was given the grain and had to ac-

“GIVE US BREAD!”

count for every pound of it to the Food Commissioners.

Nor was the flour turned loose after that. The Food Centrals held it and gave it directly to the bakers, who meanwhile had been licensed to act as distributors of bread. From so many bags of flour they had to produce so many loaves of bread, and since control by means of the bread-card coupon would have been as impossible as it was before, the Food Commissions assigned to each bakeshop so many consumers. The bread cards were issued in colored and numbered series. The color indicated the week in which they were valid, while the number indicated the bakeshop at which the consumer had to get his bread—had to get it in the sense that the baker was responsible for the amount the card called for. The Food Central had given the baker the necessary flour, and he had no excuse before the law when a consumer had cause for complaint. If there were one thousand consumers assigned to a bakeshop the authorities saw to it that the baker got one thousand pounds of flour, and from this one thousand loaves of bread had to be made and distributed.

The system worked like the proverbial charm. It was known as *Rayonierung*—zonification. Within a few days everybody managed to get the ration of bread allowed by the government. The bread-lines disappeared of a sudden. It made no difference now whether a woman called for her bread at eight in the morning or at four in the afternoon. Her bread card called for a

THE IRON RATION

certain quantity of bread and the baker was responsible for that amount. It was his duty to see that the consumer did not go hungry.

Much of the socio-economic machine was running again—not on its old track, but on a new one which the government had laid for it. And the thing was so simple that everybody wondered why it had not been done before.

But the greed of the profiteer was not yet entirely foiled. Bakers started to stretch the flour into more loaves than the law allowed, and some of them even went so far as to still turn consumers away. These were to feel the iron hand of the government, however.

I remember the case of a baker who had been in business for thirty years. His conduct under the new regulations had led to the charge that he was diverting flour, turned over to him by the Food Centrals, into illicit trading channels. The man was found guilty. Despite the fact that he had always been a very good citizen and had been reasonable in prices even when he had the chance to mulct an unprotected public, he lost his license. The judge who tried the case admitted that there were many extenuating circumstances.

"But the time has come when the law must be applied in all its severity," he said. "That you have led an honorable life in the past will not influence me in the least. You have obviously failed to grasp that these are times in which the individual must not do anything that will cause suffering. There is enough of that as it is. I

“GIVE US BREAD!”

sentence you to a fine of five thousand crowns and the loss of your license to operate a bakery. Were it not for your gray hairs I would add confinement in prison with hard labor for one year. I wish the press to announce that the next offender, regardless of age and reputation, will get this limit.”

The baker paid enough for the ten loaves he had embezzled. His fate had a most salutary effect upon others.

What bread is for the adult milk is for the baby. It, too, was zonified. The milk-line disappeared. A card similar to that governing the distribution of bread was adopted, and dealers were responsible for the quantities assigned them. The time which mothers had formerly wasted standing in line could now be given to the care of the household, and baby was benefited not a little by that.

Simple and effective as these measures were, they could not be extended to every branch of distribution. In the consumption of bread, milk, and fats known quantities could be dealt with. What the supply on hand was could be more or less accurately established, and the ration issued was the very minimum in all cases. Waste from needless consumption was out of the question.

It was different in other lines. The governments wanted to save as much food as was possible, and this could best be done by means of the food-line. The line had boosted prices into the unreasonable for the profiteer, but was now

THE IRON RATION

used by the several governments to limit consumption to the strictly necessary. To issue potatoes and other foods in given quantities was well enough, but not all that could be done. In some cases half a pound of potatoes per capita each day was too little; in others it was too much, though taken by and large it was a safe average ration. The same was true of cooking-flour and other foods. Those able to buy meat and fish stood in no need of what the government had to allow those who could not include these things in their bill of fare. On the other hand, it was impossible to divide consumers into classes and allow one class a quarter of a pound and another half a pound of potatoes each day. That would have led to confusion and waste.

A scheme of equalization that would leave unneeded food in the control of the government became necessary. The food-line provided that in a thorough manner. The woman not needing food supplies on a certain day was not likely to stand in a food-line, especially when the weather was bad. She would do with what she had, so long as she knew that when her supply was exhausted she could get more. The cards she had would not be good next week, so that she was unable to demand what otherwise would have been an arrear. The green card was good for nothing during a week of red cards. Nor was there anything to be gained by keeping the green card in the hope that some time green cards would again be issued and honored. By the time all the color shades were exhausted the

"GIVE US BREAD!"

government changed the shape of the card and later printed on its head the number of the week.

Hoarding was out of the question now. In fact, the remaining private hoard began to return to the channels of the legitimate scheme of distribution. Those who had stores of food drew upon them, now that the future seemed reasonably assured, leaving to others what they would have called for had the food-line been abolished altogether and supplies guaranteed, as in the case of bread, milk, and fats.

It must not be accepted, however, that the war-tax and war-loan policy was abandoned in favor of this new scheme. The state was still exacting its pound of flesh and the officials were too bureaucratic to always do the best that could be done. To illustrate the point with a story, I will give here another instance of how Emperor Charles interfered now and then.

He is an early riser and fond of civilian clothing —two things which made much of his work possible.

He was looking over the food-lines in the Nineteenth Municipal District of Vienna one fine morning in December of 1916. Finally he came to a shop where petroleum was being issued. The line was long and moved slowly. Charles and the "Red Prince" wondered what the trouble could be. They soon found out.

At first the shopkeeper resented the interest the two men were showing in his business. He wanted to see their authority in black on white.

"That is all right, my dear man!" said the

THE IRON RATION

"Red Prince." "This man happens to be the Emperor."

The storekeeper grew very humble of a sudden.

"It is this way, your Majesty," he explained. "The authorities have limited the allowance of coal-oil for each household to one and one-half liters [2.14 pints] per week. This measuring apparatus [a pump on the petroleum-tank whose descending piston drives the liquid into a measuring container] does not show half-liters, only one, two, three, four, and five whole liters. The customers want all they are entitled to, and usually think that I am not giving them the proper measure when I guess at the half-liter between the lines showing one and two liters. To overcome the grumbling and avoid being reported to the authorities I am measuring the petroleum in the old way by means of this half-liter measure. That takes time, of course. While I am serving one in this manner I could serve three if I could use the pump."

"Do these people have the necessary containers for a larger quantity than a liter and a half?" asked the Emperor.

"Yes, your Majesty," replied the storekeeper. "Nearly all of them have cans that hold five liters. Before the war petroleum was always bought in that quantity."

An hour afterward the burgomaster of Vienna, Dr. Weisskirchner, to whose province the fuel and light supply belonged, was called up by the Emperor on the telephone.

The conversation was somewhat emphatic.

"GIVE US BREAD!"

The mayor felt that he was elected by the people of Vienna and did not have to take very much from the young man whom accident had made Emperor. He offered to resign if he could not be left a free hand in his own sphere.

"You can do that any time you are ready!" said the young man at the other end of the wire. "But meanwhile see to it that petroleum in the city of Vienna is issued in lots of three liters every two weeks. The food-line is necessary as a disciplinary measure to prevent waste, but I do not want people to stand in line when it is unnecessary. I understand that nearly every shop selling petroleum uses these pumps. Kindly see to it that they can be used. Three liters in two weeks will do that." Thereafter petroleum was so issued.

The case led to a general clean-up in every department of food administration and regulation. In a single week more than eight hundred men connected with it were dismissed and replaced. And within a month food distribution in Austria and Hungary was on a par with that of Germany.

The question has often been asked, To what extent is the scarcity of food in Central Europe the cause of the ruthless submarine warfare?

Dr. Arthur Zimmermann, the former German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, discussed that subject with me several times while I was interviewing him.

On one occasion he was very insistent that Germany would have to shorten the war. Though there was no reason why in 1916 that

THE IRON RATION

statement should have seemed unusual to me, since the Central European public was thoroughly tired of the war and all it gave rise to, I was nevertheless struck by the insistence which the Secretary of State put into his remarks. I framed a question designed to give me the information I needed to throw light on this.

"England has been trying to starve us," said Mr. Zimmermann. "She has not succeeded so far. In the submarine we have an arm which, as our naval experts maintain, is capable of letting England feel the war a little more in food matters. I am not so sure that it is a good idea to use this weapon for that purpose, seeing that the measures incident to its use would have to be sweeping. So far as I am concerned, I am not for a policy that would make us more enemies. We have enough of them, God knows."

I may say that this was in a general way the policy of the Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg. I have been reliably informed that even Emperor William was at first an opponent of the ruthless-submarine-warfare idea. Much of his gray hair is due to criticism heaped upon Germany for acts which were thought justified, but which others found nothing short of outlawry. He had always been very sensitive in matters of honor affecting his person and the nation, and, like so many of those around him, had come to believe that Germany and the Germans could do no wrong.

Emperor Francis Joseph had been a consistent opponent of the ruthless submarine war. The *Ancona* and *Persia* cases, with which I occupied

"GIVE US BREAD!"

myself especially, convinced the old man and those near him that a recourse to the submarine, even if it were to end the war more rapidly, was a double-edged sword. The old monarch, moreover, did not like the inhuman aspects of that sort of war, whether they were avoidable or not. He came from an age in which armies still fought with chivalry—when a truce could be had for the asking. From his familiars I learned that nothing pained the old man more than when a civilian population had to be evacuated or was otherwise subjected to hardship due to the war.

His successor, Emperor Charles, held the same view. One has to know him to feel that he would not give willingly his consent to such a measure as the ruthless submarine war. His sympathies are nothing short of boyish in their warmth and sincerity. When he ascended the throne, he was an easy-going, smart lieutenant of cavalry rather than a ruler, though the load he was to shoulder has ripened him in a few months into an earnest man.

In January of 1917 Emperor Charles went for a long visit to the German general headquarters in France. He was gone three days, despite the fact that he had lots of work to do at home in connection with the public-subsistence problems.

Connections informed me that the submarine warfare was the business which had taken him into the German general headquarters. Count Ottokar Czernin, I learned, had also quietly slipped out of town, as had a number of Austro-Hungarian naval staff men and experts.

THE IRON RATION

It was Count Czernin who, a few weeks later, gave me an all-sufficient insight into the relations between the ruthless submarine warfare and the food question.

It would not have been proper, under the circumstances, to publish without some words of comment even so detailed a statement as that contained in the joint German-Austro-Hungarian note announcing the advent of the ruthless submarine war. Something had to be said to show the public why the risks involved were being taken.

The German public was taken into the confidence of the government in a speech made by Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag. That was a convenient method. In Austria-Hungary that way was not open. The Reichsrath was not in session. Count Czernin decided that I should be the medium of bringing before the world why the Austro-Hungarian government had decided to adhere to Germany's new submarine policy.

Although knowing what was coming, the actual announcement that the crisis was here was somewhat of a shock to me.

Count Czernin was seated at his big mahogany roll-top desk as I entered the room. He rose to meet me. I noticed that there was a very serious expression on his face.

"We have notified the neutral governments, and through them our enemies, that the submarine war zone has been extended and shipping to Great Britain and her allies laid under new

"GIVE US BREAD!"

restrictions," said the Foreign Minister, after I had taken a seat.

With that he handed me a copy of the *note diplomatique* with the request that I read it. This done, he placed before me a statement which he wished me to publish.

"I should like you to publish that," he said. "If you don't care for the text the way it is written change it, but be sure that you get into your own version what I say there. At any rate, you will have to translate the thing. Be kind enough to let me see it before you telegraph it."

I found that the remarks of the Foreign Minister were a little too formal and academic, and said so. So long as he could afford to take the public of the world into his confidence through my efforts, I could venture to suggest to him how to best present his case.

"I will use the entire statement," I said. "But there is every reason why it should be supplemented by a better picture of the food situation here in Austria."

Count Czernin rose and walked toward a corner of the room, where on a large table were spread out several maps executed in red and blue. I followed him.

"These are the charts the note refers to," he said. "This white lane has been left open for the Greeks and this for the Americans. What is your opinion?"

My opinion does not matter here.

"Well, if the worst comes to pass, we can't help it," said Count Czernin, returning to his

THE IRON RATION

desk. "We have to use the submarine to shorten the war. There is such a thing as being victorious at the front and defeated at home. The food situation here is most pressing. Our people are half starved all the time. Babies perish by the thousands because we cannot give them enough milk. Unless this war comes to an end soon, the effects of this chronic food shortage will impair the health of the entire nation. We must try to prevent that. It is our duty to prevent that by all means.

"I grant that there are certain technicalities of international law involved here. But we can no longer regard them. It is all very well for some men to set themselves up as sole arbiters of international law, nor would we have any objection against that if these arbiters dealt as fairly with one side as they have dealt with the other. But they have not. The Central governments could not do anything right for some of their friends—the American government included, by the way—if they stood on their heads.

"We have made peace offers. I have told you several times that we do not want any of our enemies' territory. We have never let it be understood that we wanted so much as a shovelful of earth that does not belong to us. At the same time, we do not want to lose territory, nor do we want to pay a war indemnity, since this war is not of our making.

"We have been willing to make peace and our offer has been spurned. The food question, as you know, is acute. We simply cannot raise

"GIVE US BREAD!"

the food we need so long as we must keep in the field millions of our best farmers. That leaves but one avenue open. We must shorten the war. We believe that it will be shortened by the use of the submarine. For that reason we have decided to use the arm for that purpose.

"I hope that our calculations are correct. I am no expert in that field. I also realize that a whole flood of declarations of war may follow our step. All that has been considered, however—even the possibility of the United States joining our enemies. At any rate, there was no way out. It is all very well for some to say what we are to do and are not to do, but we are fighting for our very existence. To that fight has been added the food shortage, whose aspects have never been graver than now.

"I feel that I must address myself especially to the American public. The American government has condemned us out of court. I would like to have an American jury hear this case. The American government has denied us the right of self-defense by taking the stand that we must not use the submarine as a means against the enemy merchant fleet and such neutral shipping as supplies Great Britain and her allies with foodstuffs."

Count Czernin grew more bitter as he progressed. He is an able speaker even in the English tongue.

That afternoon I had on the wires one of the greatest newspaper stories, in point of importance, that have ever been despatched.

THE IRON RATION

I spoke to Count Stefan Tisza on the food question and its bearing upon the submarine warfare. We discussed the subject for almost two hours. When the interview ended I asked the Hungarian Premier how much of it I could use.

"Just say this much for me," he remarked. "For the United States to enter the European War would be a crime against humanity."

That is the shortest interview I ever made out of so long a session. As a matter of fact, Count Tisza said enough for a book.

I may say, however, that Count Tisza found in the food question whatever justification there would be needed for anything the Central governments might do.

In Constantinople I had made the acquaintance of Dr. Richard von Kühlmann, the present German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Doctor von Kühlmann was then the *conseiller* of the German embassy at that point. He was somewhat of an admirer of the British and their ways, a fact which later caused his promotion to minister at The Hague. In all things he was delightfully objective—one of the few people I have met who did not mistake their wishes and desires for the fact.

I met Doctor von Kühlmann again in Vienna, while he was ambassador at Constantinople. But ambassadors are not supposed to talk for publication. Be that as it may, Doctor von Kühlmann had not even then made up his mind that recourse to the submarine warfare was the

"GIVE US BREAD!"

proper thing under the circumstances, no matter how great the prospect of success might appear. I had found him in Constantinople, as well as in The Hague, a consistent opponent of the submarine as a means against merchantmen. He was wholly opposed to the ruthless submarine warfare, but had no say in the decision finally reached.

The British *Aushungerungspolitik*—policy of starvation—was well in the limelight in those days. It had been discussed in the Central European press *ad nauseam* before. Now, however, it was discussed from the angle of actual achievement. Shocking conditions were revealed—they were shocking to the better classes, not to me, for I had spent many an hour keeping in touch with public-subsistence matters.

After all, this was but a new counter-irritant. The Austrian and Hungarian public, especially, did not fancy having the United States as an enemy. Though newspaper writers would belittle the military importance of the United States, many of the calmer heads in the population did not swallow that so easily. In the course of almost three years of warfare the public had come to understand that often the newspapers were woefully mistaken, and that some of them were in the habit of purposely misleading their readers, a natural result of a drastic censorship. There is no greater liar than the censor—nor a more dangerous one. By systematically suppressing one side of an issue or thing, the unpleasant one, he fosters a deception in the

THE IRON RATION

public mind that is as pitiful to behold as it is stupendous.

Now the conjuncture was such, however, that a discussion in the newspapers of the hardship suffered and the damage done by Great Britain's starvation blockade could not but fan the Central states population into a veritable frenzy. The British were to experience themselves what it was to go hungry day after day. That thought overshadowed the possibility that the United States might soon be among the open enemies of the Central states. A secret enemy the United States had long been regarded.

XIV

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

TO eat under government supervision is not pleasant. It is almost like taking the medicine which a physician has prescribed. You go to the food authorities of your district, prove that you are really the person you pretend to be, and thereby establish your claim to food, and after that you do your best to get that food.

Living at hotels, I was able to let others do the worrying. Each morning I would find at my door—provided nobody had stolen it—my daily ration of bread, of varying size—300 grams (10.5 ounces) in Germany, 240 grams (8.4 ounces) in Budapest, and 210 grams (7.3 ounces) in Vienna. At the front I fared better, for there my allowance was 400 grams (14 ounces) and often more if I cared to take it.

For the other eatables I also let the manager worry. That worry was not great, though, so long as the food “speak-easy” was in operation. The hotel could afford to pay good prices, and the patrons did not mind if the dishes were from 150 to 300 per cent. dearer than the law allowed. The law, on the other hand, saw no reason why it

THE IRON RATION

should protect people who live in hotels—until it was seen that this policy was not wise on account



Verkauf nur nach Gewicht gegen Vorlegung der Ausweiskarte und Abtrennung eines entsprechenden Abschnittes zulässig.

Nicht übertragbar!
Sorgfältig aufzubewahren!
Nachdruck verboten!

Strafbestimmungen.

Zuwiderhandlungen werden an dem Verkäufer wie an dem Käufer mit Geldstrafen bis zu 5000 K oder mit Arrest bis zu 6 Monaten geahndet. Bei einer Verurteilung kann auf den Verlust einer Gewerbeberechtigung erkannt werden. Fälschung der Ausweiskarte wird nach dem Strafgesetze bestraft.



ONE OF THE BREAD CARDS USED IN VIENNA AND LOWER AUSTRIA

Two people feeling the same degree of hunger are far better company than two who form opposite poles in that respect. Magnetic positive and

of the heavy drafts it made on the scant stores. Whether a small steak costs 8 marks or 20 makes no difference to people who can afford to eat steak at 8 marks and lamb cutlets at 15. And to these people it also makes no difference whether they consume their legal ration or two such rations.

Many months of war passed before that element began to feel the war at all. But it had to come to that in the end.

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

negative never could be so repellent. Nor is this all one-sided. One would naturally expect that in such a case the underfed would harbor hard feelings toward the overfed. That is not always the case, however.

One day a lady belonging to Central Europe's old nobility said to me:

"Well, it is getting worse every day. First they took my automobiles. Now they have taken my last horses. Taxis and cabs are hard to get. I have to travel on the street-cars now. It is most annoying."

I ventured the opinion that street-car travel was a tribulation. The cars were always overcrowded.

"It is not that," explained the lady. "It is the smell."

"Of the unwashed multitude?"

"Yes! And—"

"And, madame?"

"Something else," said the woman, with some embarrassment.

"I take it that you refer to the odor that comes from underfed bodies," I remarked.

"Precisely," assented the noble lady. "Have you also noticed it?"



THE BREAD CARD ISSUED BY THE
FOOD AUTHORITIES OF BERLIN

THE IRON RATION

"Have you observed it recently?" I asked.

"A few days ago. The smell was new to me."

"Reminded you, perhaps, of the faint odor of a cadaver far off?"

The light of complete understanding came into the woman's eyes.

"Exactly, that is it. Do you know, I have been trying ever since then to identify the odor. But that is too shocking to think of. And yet you are right. It is exactly that. How do you account for it?"

"Malnutrition! The waste of tissue due to that is a process not wholly dissimilar to the dissolution which sets in at death," I explained.

I complimented the woman on her fine powers of discernment. The smell was not generally identified. I was familiar with it for the reason that I had my attention drawn to it first in South Africa among some underfed Indian coolies, and later I had detected it again in Mexico among starving peons.

"Good God!" exclaimed the lady, after a period of serious thought. "Have we come to that?"

I assured her that the situation was not as alarming as it looked. In the end the healthy constitution would adjust itself to the shortage in alimentation. No fit adult would perish by it, though it would be hard on persons over fifty years of age. There could be no doubt that many of them would die of malnutrition before the war was over. Babies, also, would cease to live in large numbers if their diet had to be similarly restricted.

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

The smell had a repellent effect upon the woman. I met her many times after that and learned that it was haunting her. Her desire to keep it out of her palatial residence caused her to pay particular attention to the food of her servants. The case was most interesting to me. I had sat for days and nights in the trenches on Gallipoli, among thousands of unburied dead, and there was little that could offend my olfactory nerves after that, if indeed it had been possible before, seeing that I had for many weary months followed the revolutions in Mexico. Thus immune to the effects of the condition in question, I was able to watch closely a very interesting psychological phenomenon.

I found that it was torture for the woman to get near a crowd of underfed people. She began to shrink at their very sight.

"I take it that you fear death very much, madame," I said, one day.

"I dread the very thought of it," was the frank reply.

"But why should you?" I asked. "It is a perfectly natural condition."

"But an unjust one," came the indignant answer.

"Nothing in nature is unjust," I said. "Nature knows neither right nor wrong. If she did, she would either cease to produce food altogether for your people and state, or she would produce all the more—if war can be laid at the door of nature in arguments of right and wrong."

THE IRON RATION

"But that has nothing to do with the smell—that awful smell," insisted the woman.

"It has not, to be sure. Our conversation was side-tracked by your remark that death was an unjust natural condition. Your words show that you are living in illusions. You have an inherent loathing for the underfed, because your instincts associate the smell of their bodies with dissolution itself. But you are not the only one so affected. Thousands of others feel the same discomfiture."

The long and short of the discussion was that I proved to my own satisfaction that the woman was one of those self-centered creatures to whom pity is merely known as a noun. I suggested discreetly that a little more sympathy for the afflicted, a little more love for her kind, would prove a first-class deodorant.

Let us examine what the diet of the Central states population then was. In doing this, it must be borne in mind that the rural population, always at the fountainhead of food, fared much better. The conditions pictured are essentially those of the industrial classes in the towns and cities.

The adult, after rising in the morning, would drink a cup or two of some substitute for coffee, or very bad tea, without milk, if there were children, and with very little sugar. With this would be eaten a third of the day's ration of bread, about two and one-half ounces. That meal had to suffice until noon, when a plate of soup, a slice of bread, two ounces of meat, and

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

two ounces of vegetables were taken, to be supplemented by a small quantity of farinaceous food in the form of some pudding or cake. A cup of coffee substitute would go with this meal. At four in the afternoon another cup of substitute coffee or poor tea would be taken by those who could afford it, usually together with cake equal to a half-ounce of wheat flour and a quarter-ounce of sugar. The evening meal would be the same as dinner, without soup and pudding, a little cheese and the remaining seventy grams of bread taking their place. As a rule, a glass of beer was drunk with this. But the nutritive value of that was small now. It was more a chemical than a malt product, and contained at best but 4 per cent. of alcohol.

That was the meal allowed by the government. Those who had the opportunity never allowed themselves to be satisfied with it. But the vast majority of people received that and nothing more, especially later when fish and fruit had soared skyward in price.

A chemical analysis of this bill of fare would probably show that it was ample to sustain human life. Some American food crank might even discover that there was a little to spare. But the trouble is that often the scientific ration is compounded by persons who lead an inactive life and who at best make exercise the purpose of special study and effort. The bulk of any population, however, must work hard, and must eat more if elimination is not to exceed assimilation.

THE IRON RATION

The food scientist has his value. But he generally overestimates that value himself. Thus it happened that the Central states governments were soon obliged to allow a larger ration of bread, sugar, and fat to all persons engaged in heavy labor. At first this was overlooked here and there, and, bureaucratism being still strong then, strikes were necessary to persuade the

Der Rat zu Dresden.

Bezugskarte für $\frac{1}{4}$ kg ($\frac{1}{2}$ Pf.)

**Butter oder Margarine
oder Speisefett oder
Kunstspeisefett**

in der Zeit vom 30. 11. bis 27. 12. 15.

Der Rat zu Dresden.

Bezugskarte für $\frac{1}{4}$ kg ($\frac{1}{2}$ Pf.)

**Butter oder Margarine
oder Speisefett oder
Kunstspeisefett**

in der Zeit vom 30. 11. bis 27. 12. 15.

Der Rat zu Dresden.

15

Bezugskarte für $\frac{1}{4}$ kg ($\frac{1}{2}$ Pf.)

**Butter oder Margarine
oder Speisefett oder
Kunstspeisefett**

in der Zeit vom 30. 11. bis 27. 12. 15.

Der Rat zu Dresden.

Bezugskarte für $\frac{1}{4}$ kg ($\frac{1}{2}$ Pf.)

**Butter oder Margarine
oder Speisefett oder
Kunstspeisefett**

in der Zeit vom 30. 11. bis 27. 12. 15.

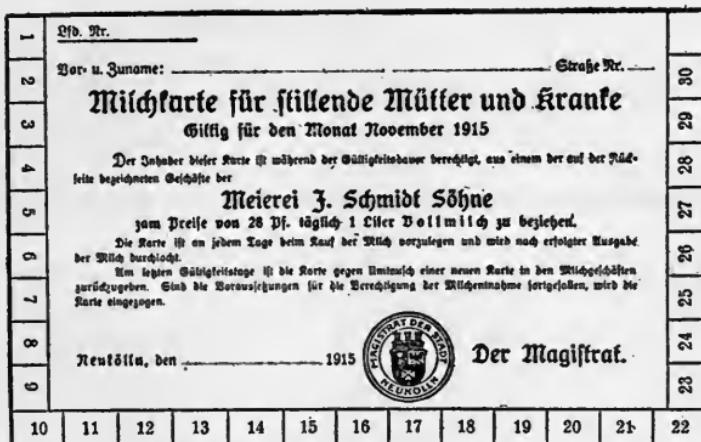
THE BUTTER AND FAT CARD OF DRESDEN

governments to meet the reasonable demands of the hard-labor classes.

Scant as this daily fare was, it was not everybody who could add to it the allowance of meat. The unskilled laborer, for instance, did not earn enough to buy beef at from sixty to seventy-five cents American a pound, the cheapest cut being sold at that price. As a rule, he tried to get the small quantity of animal fat, lard, suet, or tallow which the authorities allowed him. But often he failed to get it. Potato soup and

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

bread, and maybe a little pudding, would in that case make up the meal. If luck had been good there might also be a little jam or some dried fruit to go into the "pudding," which otherwise would be just plain wheat flour, of which each family was then given five ounces daily. If there were children to take care of, the wheat flour had to be left to them, for the reason that



MILK CARD ISSUED TO NURSING MOTHERS AND THE SICK AT
NEUKOLLN, A SUBURB OF BERLIN

the quantity of milk allowed them was entirely too small, amounting in the case of children from three to four years to seven-eighths of a pint daily, with 1.76 pints the limit for any infant.

Even this fare might have been bearable had it been supplemented by the usual amount of sugar. In the past this had been as much as six pounds per month and person; now the regulations permitted the consumption of only 2.205

THE IRON RATION

pounds per month and capita for the urban and 1.65 pounds for the rural population, while persons engaged at hard labor were allowed 2.75 pounds. Parents who were willing to surrender all to their children went without sugar entirely.

How these victuals were obtained by the woman of the household has already been indicated. Heretofore it had been necessary to stand in line for bread, fat, and milk, the latter two being usually obtained simultaneously at the Fat Central. The establishing of food zones—*Rayons*—had obviated that. The measure was a great relief, but since it governed no more than the distribution of these articles, much standing in line was still necessary. The disciplinary value of the food-line was still kept in mind in the distribution of potatoes, beets (*Wrucken*), wheat flour; now and then other cereal products, such as macaroni, biscuits, buckwheat flour, and oatmeal; meat when the city distributed it at or below cost price; fuel, coal-oil, sugar, and all groceries; soap and washing-powder; shoes, clothing, textiles of any sort, thread, and tobacco. Now and then dried fruits would be distributed, and occasionally jam, though with the ever-increasing shortage in sugar little fruit was being preserved in that manner. Once a week the solitary egg per capita would have to be waited for. One egg was not much to waste hours for, and usually people did not deem it worth while to claim it, if they had no children. The woman who had children was glad, however, to get the four, five, or six eggs to which her family was

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

entitled. It might mean that the youngest would be able to get an egg every other day. Such, indeed, was the intention of the government, and such was the purpose of the food-line. It would happen now and then that there were so many who did not claim their weekly egg that the woman with children got a double ration!

For many of these things certain days had been set aside. Potatoes could be drawn every other day, for instance, while wheat flour was issued every fourth day, meat on all "meat" days, fuel once a week, petroleum every two weeks, and sugar once a month. Shoes and clothing were issued only after the Clothing Central had been satisfied that they were needed. It was the same with thread, except silk thread, and with tobacco one took a chance. Other articles were distributed when they were available, a notice of the date being posted near some shop where the food-liners could see it. The arrival of "municipal" beef and pork was generally advertised in the newspapers.

In this manner, then, was the government ration obtained. To it could be added fresh, salted, and dried fish, when available, and all the green vegetables and salads one wanted—peas and beans in season; in their dry form they were hard to get at any time. For a while, also, sausage could be bought without a ticket. The government put a stop to that when it was found that much illicit trading was done with that class of food.

Many hours were wasted by the women of

THE IRON RATION

the household in the course of a month by standing in line. The newspapers conducted campaigns against this seemingly heartless policy of the food authorities, but without result. The food-line was looked upon as essential in food conservation, as indeed it was. In the course of time it had been shown that people would call for food allotted them by their tickets, whether they needed it or not, and would then sell it again with a profit. To assure everybody of a supply in that manner would also lead to waste in consumption. Those who did not absolutely need all of their ration did not go to the trouble of standing in a food-line for hours in all sorts of weather.

Subsisting at the public crib was unpleasant business under such conditions, but there was no way out. The food "speak-easy" was almost as much a thing of the past as was the groaning board of ante-bellum times, though it was by no means entirely eradicated, as the trial of a small ring of food sharks in Berlin on October 10, 1917, demonstrated. How hard it was for the several governments to really eradicate the illicit trading in food, once this had been decided upon, was shown in this case, which involved one of the largest caches ever discovered. There were hidden in this cache 27,000 pounds of wheat flour, 300 pounds of chocolate, 15,000 pounds of honey, 40,000 cigars, and 52,000 pounds of copper, tin, and brass. The odd part of the case was that to this hoard belonged also 24 head of cattle and 9 pigs.

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

On the same day there was tried in a Berlin jury court a baker who had "saved" 6,500 pounds of flour from the amounts which the food authorities had turned over to him. It was shown that the baker had sold the loaves of bread he was expected to bake from the flour. Of course he had adulterated the dough to make the loaves weigh what the law required and what the bread tickets called for. A fine profit had been made on the flour. The food authorities had assigned him the supply at \$9 for each 200-pound bag. Some of it he sold illicitly at \$55 per sack to a man who had again sold it for \$68 to another chain-trader, who later disposed of it to a consumer for \$80 a bag. There can be no doubt that this flour made expensive bread, but it seems that there were people willing to pay the price.

But forty cents for a pound of wheat flour was something which only a millionaire war purveyor could afford. All others below that class, materially, ate the government ration and stood in line.

Sad in the extreme was the spectacle which the food-lines in the workman quarters of Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest presented. Upon the women of the households the war was being visited hardest. To see a pair of good shoes on a woman came to be a rare sight. Skirts were worn as long as the fabric would keep together, and little could be said of the shawls that draped pinched faces, sloping shoulders, and flat breasts. There were children in those food-lines. Thin

THE IRON RATION

feet stuck in the torn shoes, and mother's shawl served to supplement the hard-worn dress or patched suit. Everything had to go for food, and prices of apparel were so high that buying it was out of the question.

Once I set out for the purpose of finding in these food-lines a face that did not show the ravages of hunger. That was in Berlin. Four long lines were inspected with the closest scrutiny. But among the three hundred applicants for food there was not one who had had enough to eat in weeks. In the case of the younger women and the children the skin was drawn hard to the bones and bloodless. Eyes had fallen deeper into the sockets. From the lips all color was gone, and the tufts of hair that fell over parchmented foreheads seemed dull and famished—sign that the nervous vigor of the body was departing with the physical strength.

I do not think sentimentalism of any sort can be laid at my door. But I must confess that these food-lines often came near getting the best of me. In the end they began to haunt me, and generally a great feeling of relief came over me when I saw that even the last of a line received what they had come for.

The poorer working classes were not getting enough food under the system, nor were they always able to prepare the little they got in the most advantageous manner. While the effort had been made to instruct women how to get the maximum of nutriment from any article, and how to combine the allowances into

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

a well-balanced ration, results in that direction were not satisfying. Many of the women would spend too much money on vegetable foods that filled the stomach but did not nourish. Others again, when a few extra cents came into their hands, would buy such costly things as geese and other fowl. Cast adrift upon an ocean of food scarcity and high prices, these poor souls were utterly unable to depart from their cooking methods, which had tastiness rather than greatest utility for their purpose. The consequence was that the ration, which according to food experts was ample, proved to be anything but that.

In Berlin the so-called war kitchens were introduced. A wheeled boiler, such as used by the army, was the principal equipment of these kitchens. Very palatable stews were cooked in them and then distributed from house to house against the requisite number of food-card checks. The innovation would have been a success but for the fact that most people believed they were not getting enough for the coupons they had surrendered. The stew could not be weighed, and often there would be a little more meat in one dipperful than in another. There was grumbling, and finally the women who were giving their time and labor to the war kitchens were accused of partiality. The kitchens were continued a while longer. They finally disappeared because nobody cared to patronize them any more. It is possible, also, that people had grown tired of the stew eternal.

The *Volksküchen*—people's kitchens—and those

THE IRON RATION

war kitchens which were established when the war began, operated with more success. The public was used to them. They were located in buildings, so that one could eat the food there and then, and their bill of fare was not limited to stews. Being managed by trained people, these kitchens rendered splendid service to both the public and the food-regulators. I have eaten in several of them and found that the food was invariably good.

A class that had been hit hard by the war was that of the small office-holders and the less successful professionals, artists included. They were a proud lot—rather starve than eat at a war kitchen or accept favors from any one. The hardships they suffered are almost indescribable. While the several governments had made their small officials a war allowance, the addition to the income which that gave was almost negligible. At an average it represented an increase in salary of 20 per cent., while food, and the decencies of life, which this class found as indispensable as the necessities themselves, had gone up to an average of 180 per cent. The effect of this rise was catastrophic in these households. Before the war their life had been the shabby genteel; it was now polite misery. Yet the class was one of the most essential and deserved a better fate. In it could be found some of the best men and women in Central Europe.

Devoted to the régime with heart and soul, this class had never joined in any numbers the co-operative consumption societies of Germany



Photograph from Henry Ruschin

TRAVELING-KITCHEN IN BERLIN

A food-conservation measure that failed, because the people grew tired of the stew dispensed by the "Food Transport Wagon."



Photograph from Henry Ruschin

STREET TRAM AS FREIGHT CARRIER

As horses and motor fuel became scarce the street traction systems were given over part of each day to transporting merchandise.



SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

and Austria-Hungary, because of their socialistic tendencies. This delivered them now into the hands of the food shark. Finally, the several governments, realizing that the small official—*Beamte*—had to be given some thought, established purchasing centrals for them, where food could be had at cost and now and then below cost. Nothing of the sort was done for the small professionals, however.

Men and women of means came to the rescue of that class in the very nick of time. But a great deal of tact had to be used before these war sufferers could be induced to accept help. It was not even easy to succor them privately, as Mrs. Frederick C. Penfield, wife of the American ambassador at Vienna, had occasion enough to learn. To alleviate their condition *en masse*, as would have to be done if the means available were to be given their greatest value, was almost impossible. Shabby gentility is nine-tenths false pride, and nothing is so hard to get rid of as the things that are false.

But there were those who understand the class. Among them I must name Frau Doctor Schwarzwald, of Vienna, whose co-operative dining-room was a great success, so long as she could get the necessary victuals, something that was not always easy.

I had taken a mild interest in the charities and institutions of Frau Schwarzwald, and once came *near* getting a barrel of flour and a hundred pounds of sugar for the co-operative dining-room and its frayed patrons. I announced the

THE IRON RATION

fact prematurely at a gathering of the patron angels of the dining-room, among whom was Frau Cary-Michaelis, the Danish novelist and poetess. Before I knew what was going on the enthusiastic patron angels had each kissed me—on the cheek, of course. Then they danced for joy, and next day I was forced to announce that, after all, there would be no flour and no sugar. The owner of the goods—not a food shark, but an American diplomatist—had disposed of them to another American diplomatist. I thought it best to do penance for this. So I visited a friend of mine and held him up for one thousand crowns for the co-operative dining-room. That saved me. I was very careful thereafter not to make rash promises. After all, I was sure of the flour and sugar, and so happy over my capture that I had a hard time keeping to myself the glad news as long as I did, which was one whole day. In that dining-room ate a good percentage of Vienna's true intellectuals—painters, sculptors, architects, poets, and writers all unable just then to earn a living.

I was not always so unsuccessful, however. For another circle of down-at-the-heels I smuggled out of the food zone of the Ninth German Army in Roumania the smoked half of a pig, fifty pounds of real wheat flour, and thirty pounds of lard. Falkenhayn might command that army at the front, but for several days I was its only hero, nevertheless. But in food matters I had proved a good *buscalero* before.

The food craze was on. Women who never

SUBSISTING AT THE PUBLIC CRIB

before in their lives had talked of food now spoke of that instead of fashions. The gossip of the *salon* was abandoned in favor of the dining-room scandals. So-and-so had eaten meat on a meatless day, and this or that person was having wheat bread and rolls baked by the cook. The interesting part of it was that usually the very people who found fault with such trespass did the same thing, but were careful enough not to have guests on that day.

In the same winter I was to see at Budapest an incident that fitted well into the times.

I was one of the few non-Magyars who attended the coronation dinner of King Charles and Queen Zita.

The lord chief steward brought in a huge fish on a golden platter and set it down before the royal couple. The King and Queen bowed to the gorgeously attired functionary, who thereupon withdrew, taking the fish with him.

We all got the smell of it. I had eaten breakfast at four in the morning. Now it was two in the afternoon and a morsel of something would have been very much in order. Since seven I had been in the coronation church. It was none too well heated and I remember how the cold went through my dress shirt. But the fish disappeared—to be given to the poor, as King Stefan had ordained in the year A.D. 1001.

In a few minutes the lord chief steward—I think that is the man's title—reappeared. This time he carried before him a huge roast. (Business as before.) For a third, fourth, fifth, and

THE IRON RATION

sixth time the high functionary paraded enticing victuals through the hall without coming down to business. It was a lonesome affair, that dinner, and everybody was glad when the King had taken a sip of wine and the cries of, "*Eljen a kiralyi,*" put a period to that phase of the coronation.

How well that ceremony fitted into the times!

King Charles wanted to be impartial, and a few days later he inspected the dining-car attached to the train that was to take his brother Maximilian to Constantinople. In the kitchen of the car he found some rolls and some wheat flour. He had them removed.

"I know, Max, that you didn't order these things," he said to his brother. "The dining-car management has not yet come to understand that no favors must be shown anybody. If the steward of the car should by any chance buy flour in Bulgaria or Turkey, do me the favor to pitch him out of the window when the car is running, so that he will fall real hard. That is the only way in which we can make a dent into special eating privileges."

By the way, there was a time when the present Emperor-King of Austria-Hungary and his Empress-Queen had to live on a sort of sandwich income, and were glad when the monthly allowance from the archducal exchequer was increased a little when the present crown-prince was born.

But that is another story.

XV

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF WAR

IT never rains but it pours.

It was so in Central Europe. Not alone had the production of food by the soil been hamstrung by the never-ending mobilizations of labor for military purposes, but the means of communication began to fail from the same cause.

If it takes a stitch in time to save nine in ordinary walks of life, it takes a stitch in time to save ninety, and often all, in railroading. The improperly ballasted tie means too great a strain in the fish-plate. It may also mean a fractured rail. Both may lead to costly train wrecks.

But the makeshifts employed in Central Europe averted much of this. Where the regular track gangs had been depleted by the mobilizations, women and Russian prisoners-of-war took their places. But the labor of these was not as good as that given by the old hands. There is a knack even in pushing crushed rock under a railroad tie. Under one tie too much may be placed and not enough under another, so that the very work that is to keep the rail-bed evenly

THE IRON RATION

supported may result in an entirely different state of affairs. Two ties lifted up too much by the ballasting may cause the entire rail to be unevenly supported, so that it would have been better to leave the work undone altogether.

Thus it came that all railroad traffic had to be reduced in speed. Expresses were discontinued on all lines except the trunk routes that were kept in fairly good condition for that very purpose. Passenger-trains ran 20 miles an hour instead of 40 and 45, and freight-trains had their schedules reduced to 12. That meant, of course, that with the same motive power and rolling stock about half the normal traffic could be maintained.

But that was not all. The maintenance departments of rolling stock and motive power had also been obliged to furnish their quota of men for service in the field. At first the several governments did not draw heavily on the mechanicians in the railroad service, but ultimately they had to do this. The repair work was done by men less fitted, and cleaning had to be left to the women and prisoners-of-war.

Soon the "flat" wheels were many on the air-braked passenger-cars. It came to be a blessing that the freight-trains were still being braked by hand, for otherwise freight traffic would have suffered more than it did.

I took some interest in railroading, and a rather superficial course in it at the military academy had made me acquainted with a few of its essentials. Close attention to the question

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF WAR

in the fall of 1916 gave me the impression that it would not be long before the only thing of value of most Central European railroads would be the right of way and its embankments, bridges, cuts, and tunnels—the things known collectively as *Bahnkörper*—line body.

When I first made the acquaintance of Central Europe's railroads, I found them in a high state of efficiency. The rail-bed was good, the rolling stock showed the best of care—repairs were made in time, and paint was not stinted—and the motive power was of the very best. Efficiency had been aimed at and obtained. To be sure, there was nothing that could compare with the best railroading in the United States. The American train *de luxe* was unknown. But if its comforts could not be had, the communities, on the other hand, did not have to bear the waste that comes from it. Passenger travel, moreover, on most lines, moved in so small a radius that the American "Limited" was not called for, though the speed of express-trains running between the principal cities was no mean performance at that.

It was not long before all this was to vanish. The shortage in labor began to be seriously felt. There were times, in fact, when the railroad schedules showed the initiated exactly what labor-supply conditions were. When an hour was added to the time of transit from Berlin to Vienna I knew that the pinch in labor was beginning to be badly felt. When one of the expresses running between the two capitals was

THE IRON RATION

taken off altogether, I surmised that things were in bad shape, and when ultimately the number of passenger-trains running between Vienna and Budapest was reduced from twelve each day to four, it was plain enough that railroading in Austria-Hungary was down to one-third of what it had been heretofore—lower than that, even, since the government tried to keep up as good a front as possible.

In Germany things were a little better, owing to the close husbanding of resources which had been done at the very outbreak of the war. But to Germany the railroads were also more essential than to Austria-Hungary, so that, by and large, there really was little difference.

The neatly kept freight-cars degenerated into weather-beaten boxes on wheels. The oil that would have been needed to paint them was now an article of food and was required also in the manufacture of certain explosives. So long as the car body would stand on the chassis it was not repaired. Wood being plentiful, it was thought better economy to replace the old body by a new one when finally it became dangerous to pull it about any longer.

It was the same with the passenger-cars. The immaculate cleanliness which I had learned to associate with them was replaced by the most slovenly sweeping. Dusting was hardly ever attempted. From the toilet-rooms disappeared soap and towel, and usually there was no water in the tank. The air-brakes acted with a jar, as the shoes gripped the flat surface of the

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF WAR

wheels, and soon the little doll trains were an abomination, especially when, for the sake of economy, all draperies were removed from the doors and windows.

The motive power was in no better condition. The engines leaked at every steam and water joint, and to get within 60 per cent. of the normal efficiency for the amount of coal consumed was a remarkable performance. It meant that the engineer, who was getting an allowance on all coal saved, had to spend his free time repairing the "nag" he ran.

Constantly traveling from one capital to another, and from one front to the other, I was able to gauge the rapid deterioration of the railroads. To see in cold weather one of the locomotives hidden entirely in clouds of steam that was intended for the cylinders caused one to wonder how the thing moved at all. The closed-in passenger stations reminded me of laundries, so thick were the vapors of escaping steam.

Despite the reduction in running-time, wrecks multiplied alarmingly. It seemed difficult to keep anything on the rails at more than a snail's pace.

To the freight movement this was disastrous. Its volume had to be reduced to a quarter of what it had been. This caused great hardship, despite the fact that the distribution and consumption zones had put an end to all unnecessary trundling about of merchandise. In the winter the poor freight service led to the exposure of foodstuffs to the cold. It was nothing unusual to find

THE IRON RATION

that a whole train-load of potatoes had frozen in transit and become unfit for human consumption. Other shipments suffered similarly.

In countries that were forced to count on every crumb that was a great loss. It could not be overcome under the circumstances.

In the winter the lame railroads were unable to bring the needed quantities of coal into the population centers. This was especially true of the winter of 1916-17. Everybody having lived from hand to mouth throughout the summer, and the government having unwiseley put a ban on the laying-in of fuel-supplies, there was little coal on hand when the cold weather came. Inside of three weeks the available stores were consumed. The insistent demand for fuel led to a rush upon the lines tapping the coal-fields. Congestion resulted, and when the tangle was worst heavy snows began to fall. The railroads failed utterly.

Electric street traction shared the fate of the railroads. To save fuel the service was limited to the absolutely necessary. Heretofore most lines had not permitted passengers to stand in the cars. Now standing was the rule. When one half of the rolling stock had been run into the ground, the other half was put on the streets, and that, too, was shortly ruined.

The traction-service corporations, private and municipal alike, had been shown scant mercy by the several governments when men were needed. Soon they were without the hands to keep their rolling stock in good repair. Most

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF WAR

of the car manufacturers had meanwhile gone into the ammunition business, so that it was impossible to get new rolling stock. Further drafts on the employees of the systems led to the employment of women conductors, and, in some cases, drivers. While these women did their best, it could not be said that this was any too good on lines that were much frequented. Travel on the street cars became a trial. People who never before had walked did so now.

As was to be expected, the country roads were neglected. Soon the fine macadamized surfaces were full of holes, and after that it was a question of days usually when the road changed places with a ditch of deep mire. The farmer, bringing food to the railroad station or town, moved now about half of what was formerly a load. He was short of draft animals. Levy after levy was made by the military authorities. By the end of 1916 the farms in Central Europe had been deprived of half their horses.

It has been said that a man may be known by his clothing. That is not always true. There is no doubt, however, that a community may well be recognized by its means of transportation. Travel in every civilized country has proved that to my full satisfaction. I once met a man who insisted that if taken blindfolded from one country into another he would be able to tell among what people he found himself, or what sort of gentry they were, merely by traveling on their railroads. To which I would add that he could also very easily determine what sort

THE IRON RATION

of government they had, if he had an ear for all the "*Es ist Verboten*," "*C'est défendu*," and "It is not allowed" which usually grace the interiors of stations and car.

Travel was the hardest sort of labor in the Central European states. I was obliged to do much of it. And most of it I did standing. I have made the following all-afoot trips: Berlin-Bentheim, Berlin-Dresden, Berlin-Cologne, Vienna-Budapest, and Vienna-Trieste, and this at a time when the regular running-time had become 80 to 150 per cent. longer.

The means of communication of Central Europe had sunk to the level of the nag before the ragman's cart. The shay was not good-looking, either.

But the wear and tear of war did not affect the means of communication alone. Every building in Central Europe suffered heavily from it. Materials and labor for upkeep were hard to get at any time and were costly. Real property, moreover, suffered under the moratorium, while the constantly increasing taxes left little in the pocket of the owner to pay for repairs. As already stated, paint was hard to get. Exposed to the weather, the naked wood decayed. Nor were varnishes to be had for the protection of interior woodwork.

Many manufacturing plants had to be closed, first of all those which before the war had depended upon the foreign market. The entire doll industry, for instance, suspended work. In other branches of manufacture the closing-down

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF WAR

was partial, as in the case of the textile-mills. Not alone had the buildings to be neglected in this instance, but a great deal of valuable machinery was abandoned to rust. As the stock of copper, tin, and brass declined the several governments requisitioned the metals of this sort that were found in idle plants and turned them over to the manufacturers of ammunition. While the owners were paid the price which these metals cost in the form of machinery parts and the like, the economic loss to the community was, nevertheless, heavy.

Farm implements and equipment also suffered much from inattention. Tens of thousands of horses perished at the fronts and almost every one of them meant a loss to some farm. The money that had been paid for them had usually been given back to the government in the form of taxes, so that now the farmer had lost his horse or horses in much the same manner as if some epidemic had been at work. Valuable draft and milk animals were requisitioned to provide meat for the armies. In certain districts the lack of vitriol had resulted in the destruction of vineyards and orchards.

To give a better picture of what this meant, I will cite the case of an acquaintance who is somewhat of a gentleman farmer near Coblenz, on the Rhine.

When the war broke out this man had in live stock: Five horses, eight cows, forty sheep, and a large stock of poultry. He also had several small vineyards and a fine apple orchard.

THE IRON RATION

In the winter of 1916-17 his stock had shrunk to two horses, two cows, no sheep, very little poultry, and no vineyard. The apple orchard was also dying from lack of Bordeaux mixture.

In January, 1917, I obtained some figures dealing with the wear and tear of war in the kingdom of Saxony. Applying them on a per-capita basis to all of the German Empire, I established that so far the war had caused deterioration amounting to \$8,950,000,000, or \$128 for each man, woman, and child. In Austria-Hungary the damage done was then estimated at \$6,800,000,000.

These losses were due to absence from their proper spheres in the economic scheme of some 14,000,000 able-bodied men who had been mobilized for service in connection with the war. This vast army consumed at a frightful rate and produced very little now. To non-productive consumption had to be added the rapid deterioration due to all abandonment of upkeep. The Central states were living from hand to mouth and had no opportunity of engaging in that thorough maintenance which had been given so much attention before. All material progress had been arrested, and this meant that decay and rust got the upper hand.

XVI

THE ARMY TILLS

MEN getting much physical exercise in the open air consume much more food than those confined. In cold weather such food must contain the heat which is usually supplied by fuel. All of which is true of the soldier in a greater degree. This, and the fact that in army subsistence, transportation and distribution are usually coupled with great difficulty, made it necessary for the Central Powers to provide their forces chiefly with food staples.

Before the war about 35 per cent. of the men mobilized had lived largely on cereals and vegetables. Little meat is consumed by the rural population of Central Europe. For the reasons already given, that diet had to make room for one composed of more concentrated and more heat-producing elements. Bread, meat, fats, and potatoes were its principal constituents. Beans, peas, and lentils were added as the supply permitted. In the winter larger quantities of animal fats were required to keep the men warm, and in times of great physical exertion the allowance of sugar had to be increased.

THE IRON RATION

Since at first the army produced no food at all, the civil population had to produce what was needed. With, roughly, 42 per cent. of the soldiers coming from the food-producing classes, this was no small task, especially since the more fitted had been called to the colors.

The governments of Central Europe realized as early as in the spring of 1915 that the army would have to produce at least a share of the food it needed. Steps were taken to bring that about. The war had shown that cavalry was, for the time being, useless. On the other hand, it was not good military policy to disband the cavalry organizations and turn them into artillery and infantry. These troops might be needed again sooner or later. That being the case, it was decided to employ mounted troops in the production of food. Fully 65 per cent. of the men in that branch of the military establishments of Central Europe came from the farm and were familiar with the handling of horses. That element was put to work behind the fronts producing food.

No totals of this production have ever been published, to my knowledge, so that I can deal only with what I actually saw. I must state, however, that the result cannot have been negligible, though on the whole it was not what some enthusiasts have claimed for it.

I saw the first farming of this sort in Galicia. There some Austro-Hungarian cavalry organizations had tilled, roughly, sixty thousand acres, putting the fields under wheat, rye, oats, and

THE ARMY TILLS

potatoes. When I saw the crops they were in a fair state of prosperity, though I understand that later a drought damaged them much. The colonel in charge of the work told me that he expected to raise food enough for a division, which should not have been difficult, seeing that three acres ought to produce food enough for any man, even if tilled in a slovenly way.

Throughout Poland and the parts of Russia then occupied the Germans were doing the same thing. What the quality of their effort was I have no means of knowing, but if they are to be measured by what I saw in France, during the Somme offensive in 1916, the results obtained must have been very satisfying.

One of the organizations then lying in the Bapaume sector was the German Second Guards Substitute-Reserve Division — *Garde-Ersatz-Reserve-Division*. I think that the palm for war economy must be due that organization. In my many trips to various fronts (I have been on every front in Central Europe, the Balkan, Turkey, and Asia) and during my long stays there I have never seen a crowd that had made itself so much at home in the enemy country.

The body in question had then under cultivation some sixteen hundred acres of very good soil, on which it was raising wheat, rye, barley, oats, beans, peas, lentils, sugar-beets, roots of various sorts, and potatoes. It had made hay enough for its own draft animals and had sold a large quantity to neighboring divisions.

At Gommecourt the division operated a well-
19 277

THE IRON RATION

equipped modern dairy, able to convert into butter and cheese the milk of about six hundred cows. Its output was large enough to supply the men in the trenches with all the butter and cheese they could reasonably expect. A large herd of pigs was kept by the division, and as General von Stein, the commander of the sector, now Prussian Minister of War, informed me at a table that offered the products of the division at a luncheon, the organization was then operating, somewhere near the actual firing-line, two water-mills, a large sugar-plant, and even a brewery. Coffee, salt, and a few other trifles were all the division received from the rear.

It was then the middle of August, so that I was able to see the results of what had been done by these soldier-farmers. I can state that soil was never put to better use. Cultivation had been efficiently carried out and the crops were exceedingly good.

One of the most vivid pictures I retain from that week in "Hell" shows several German soldiers plowing a field east of Bucquois into which British shells were dropping at the time. The shells tore large craters in the plowed field, but with an indifference that was baffling the men continued their work. I have not yet been able to explain what was the purpose of this plowing in August, except to lay the knife at the root of the weeds; nor can I quite believe that this end justified exposing men and valuable animals. At any rate, the thing was done.

The case cited represents the maximum that

THE ARMY TILLS

was achieved in food production by any army organization, so far as I know. But that maximum was no mean thing. That division, at least, did not depend on the civil population for food.

Several trips through Serbia and Macedonia in the same year showed me what the German "economic" and occupation troops had done in those parts.

On the whole, the efforts at food production of the "economic" troops—organization of older men barely fit for service in the firing-line—had not been fortunate. The plan had been to put as much soil under crops as was possible. For this purpose traction plows had been brought along and whole country sites had been torn up. Though the soil of the valleys of Serbia is generally very rich, and the climate one of the best for farming, the crops raised in that year were far from good. Some held that it was due to the seed, which had been brought from Germany. Others were of the opinion that the plowing had been carelessly done, leaving too much leeway to the weeds. Be that as it may, the work of the economic companies was not a success.

The occupation troops did much better, however. Together with the Serbian women they had cultivated the fields on the intensive principle. Yields had been good, I was told.

In Macedonia the fields had also been put to use by the Germans, Austro-Hungarians, and Bulgars. The last named, familiar with the cultivation of the tobacco plant, were exchanging with the others tobacco for grain. Food production

THE IRON RATION

was also attempted by the Austro-Hungarians on the Isonzo front. But since they were fighting on their own territory in districts which still had their civil population, there was little opportunity, all the less since the soil of the Carso and Bainsizza plateaus, and the mountainous regions north of them, is not suited for agriculture on a large scale. Every *doline*—funnel-shaped depression—of the Carso had its garden, however, whence the army drew most of the vegetables it consumed.

The food that was being raised for the army never reached the interior, of course. If an organization produced more than what it consumed, and such cases were extremely rare, it sold the surplus to the army commissaries. It took men and time to cultivate the fields, and these could not always be spared, especially when the losses in men were beginning to be severely felt and when the opponent engaged in offensives. It had meanwhile become necessary to throw, several times a year, divisions from one front to another, and that, too, began to interfere with the scheme, since the men no longer took the interest in the crops they had taken when they were established in a position.

I spent considerable time with the Ninth German Army operating against the Roumanians late in the fall of 1916. Much booty in food fell into the hands of that organization, among it some eleven hundred thousand tons of wheat and other grains.

Bread was bad and scarce in the Central states.

THE ARMY TILLS

When it became known that so large a quantity of breadstuff had fallen in the hands of the Centralist troops, people in Berlin and Vienna already saw some of it on their tables—but only in their minds. Falkenhayn and Mackensen issued orders that not a pound of breadstuff was to be taken from the war zone they had established, which comprised all of Roumania occupied, Transylvania, and the Dobrudja district. Nor could other food be exported to the Central civilian population. Whatever was found in the conquered territory was reserved for the use of the troops that had been employed, and the surplus was assigned to the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Bulgarian commissaries-general.

The quantities taken, however, were large, and six months later, when all needs of the armed forces had been met, the civilian populations were remembered so far as it was prudent to do so. To give that population too much might have resulted in a lessening of production at home, and that was something which could not be invited.

This policy was followed always. I know of no instance in which it was abandoned, even when the clamor for bread at home was loudest. The army came first in all things, much in the manner of the driver of a team of mules.

But it was not selfishness alone that gave rise to this policy. It served no good purpose to ship into the interior food that would later be needed by the troops. That merely increased the burden of the railroads, first by the transport of the booty homeward, and later by shipping

THE IRON RATION

back food as the troops needed it. Keeping the food where it was found obviated this traffic entirely.

On the whole, the Centralist troops never fared poorly in subsistence. It had become necessary to reduce the bread ration from 500 grams (18 ounces) to 400 grams (14 ounces) per day, but this was made good by increasing the meat and fat ration. Enough to eat was the surest way of keeping the war popular with the soldiers.

Since it is very easy to exaggerate the value of food production due to the army, I will state here specifically that this production took care of little more than what the men consumed in excess over their former diet. Their normal consumption was still borne by the civilian population, and, as the losses on the battle-field increased, and the reserves had to be employed oftener, food production in the army fell rapidly, though at present this condition appears to be discounted by the food produced in Roumania, Serbia, and Poland. The area involved is large, of course, but the surplus actually available is not great. The population of these territories has dwindled to old men, boys, and women, and their production is barely able to meet actual needs. The little that can be extracted from these people does not go very far in the subsistence of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria. These countries have together a population of, roundly, one hundred and fifteen millions to-day, of which not less than ten million of the best producers are

THE ARMY TILLS

under the colors, thereby causing a consumption in food and *materiel* that is at least one-third greater than normal—munitions and ammunition not included.

But the army had much to do with food in other directions. It controlled inter-allied exports and imports and was a power even in trade with the neutrals of Europe.

The relations between Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey were essentially military. They were this to such an extent that they almost overshadowed even the diplomatic services of these countries. For the time being, the *Militärbevollmächtigte*—military plenipotentiary—as the chief communication officer was known, eclipsed often the diplomatic plenipotentiary. Militarism was absolute. The civil government and population had no right which the military authorities need respect.

All commercial exchange passed into the hands of these military plenipotentiaries. The diplomatic service might reach an agreement for the exchange of food against manufactured articles, but finally the military saw to it that it was carried out. They bought and shipped, and received in turn the factory products that were the *quid pro quo* for the food and raw material thus secured.

In Roumania, so long as she was neutral, the *Einkaufstelle*—purchasing bureau—was indeed in the hands of civilians. As a neutral, Roumania could not permit German and Austro-Hungarian officers to be seen in the streets in

THE IRON RATION

their uniforms. They were, for all that, members of the army. For the time being, they wore mufti, nor did their transactions show that they were working directly for the army. The food that was bought was intended for the civilian population, naturally. But it has always been hard to keep from any army that which it may need. The same sack of wheat may not go to the military commissaries, but what difference will it make so long as it releases for consumption by the army a like quantity of home-grown cereals?

The German and Austro-Hungarian purchasing bureaus in Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are similarly organized. Many members of their staffs are indeed civilians, but that does not change anything, since all shipments of food entering Central Europe fall immediately under the control of the government Food Commissions, if not under that of the military commissaries direct.

To the military, then, the Central states civilian population had to look for such food as could be imported.

There was the case of Bulgaria. That country is still essentially an agricultural state. Of the five and a half million inhabitants fully 90 per cent. engage in farming and animal industry. The products of the soil constitute the major portion of Bulgaria's exports. That meant that she could ease to some extent the food shortage in Germany and Austria-Hungary.

An acquaintance of mine, a Captain Wester-

THE ARMY TILLS

hagen, formerly a banker in Wall Street, was in charge of the German purchasing bureau in Sofia. He bought whatever was edible—wheat, rye, barley, peas, beans, potatoes, butter, eggs, lard, pork, and mutton. His side lines were hides, wool, flax, mohair, hay, and animal feed-stuffs.

Indirectly, he was also an importer. Under his surveillance were brought into Bulgaria the manufactured goods Bulgaria needed, such as iron and steel products in the form of farm implements, farm machinery, building hardware, small hardware, and general machinery, glassware, paper products, instruments, surgical supplies, railroad equipment, medicines, and chemicals generally.

When the German army needed none of the food Captain Westerhagen bought, the civilian population was the beneficiary of his efforts. The fact is that my acquaintance bought whatever he could lay hands on. Now and then he bought so much that the Bulgarians began to feel the pinch. In that event the Bulgarian general staff might close down on the purchasing central for a little while, with the result that the Germans would shut down on their exports. It was a case of no food, no factory products. This sort of reciprocity led often to hard feeling—situations which Colonel von Massow, the German military plenipotentiary at Sofia, found pretty hard to untangle. But, on the whole, the arrangement worked smoothly enough.

It was so in Turkey.

THE IRON RATION

The Germans had in Constantinople one of their most remarkable men—and here I must throw a little light on German-Ottoman relations. The name of this remarkable man—remarkable in capacity, energy, industry, and farsightedness—is Corvette-Captain Humann, son of the famous archeologist who excavated Pergamum and other ancient cities and settlements in Asia Minor.

Captain Humann was born in Smyrna and had early in life made the acquaintance of Enver Pasha, now Ottoman Minister of War and vice-generalissimo of the Ottoman army. Raised in the Orient, Humann knew the people with whom he was to deal. The viewpoint of the Orient and the Turk was an open book to him. He had the advantage of being looked upon as half a Turk, for the reason that he was born in Turkey. To these qualifications Captain Humann added great natural ability and a perseverance without equal.

Officially, Captain Humann was known as the commander of the German naval base in Constantinople and as naval attaché. Actually, he was the alpha and omega of German-Ottoman relations.

There always was a great deal of friction between the Turks and the Germans. The Turk often could not see the need for speed, while the German was eternally in a hurry, from the Oriental point of view. The Turk was inclined to do things in a slovenly manner. The German insisted upon everything, in matters economic,

THE ARMY TILLS

military, and diplomatic, being in its place. German officers who had a great deal to do with these things had not always the tact and forbearance necessary. Bad blood would come of this. To make matters worse, the Turk was forever under the impression that he was being exploited. The Germans, also, refused to *baksheesh* the officials of their ally, and more trouble came from that.

It is hard to say what the general result of this would have been had not Captain Humann been on the spot. He was on *du-thou*-terms with Enver Pasha, and when things refused to move at all he would call on his friend in the Harbiyeh Nasaret in Stamboul and set them into motion again. That Turk and German did not come to blows during the first year of the war is largely due to the genius of Captain Humann. So great was the man's influence in Constantinople that the successor of Ambassador Baron von Wangenheim, Prince Metternich, grew jealous of him and had him removed to Berlin, where in the Imperial Naval Office Captain Humann chewed pencils until conditions in Constantinople were so bad that the German Emperor had to send him back, despite the prejudices he held against him. Captain Humann is not a noble, and in those days the powers that be in Prussia and Germany were not yet ready to have a commoner, no matter how able, take away glamour from the aristocratic class.

Though purchasing in Turkey was not one of the duties of Captain Humann, he was often

THE IRON RATION

obliged to take charge of it. I knew of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds of wool which the Germans had bought, but which the Turks were not willing to surrender because they were not satisfied with the price after the bargain had been closed. The case was ticklish in the extreme. Everybody had gone as far as safety permitted and the Turks had meanwhile grown more obdurate. In the end the matter had to be brought to the attention of the ambassador. He, too, decided that nothing could be done. Captain Humann was appealed to and succeeded in securing delivery of the wool.

I have quoted this case to show that very often the exchange of commodities between the Central allies was attended with much friction and difficulty. More merchandise moved over and across the Danube as personal favors done than by virtue of the commercial treaties that had been made. Personal equation was everything in the scheme, especially at times when Germany's allies were in no pressing need for arms and ammunition. The very fact that Germany was the "king-pin" in the Central European scheme caused the lesser members of the combination to be sticklers in matters affecting their rights and sovereignty.

On one occasion the predecessor of Captain Westerhagen in Sofia was said to have boastfully made the statement that what he could not get from the Bulgarians voluntarily he would find means to get, anyhow. General Jekoff, the chief of the Bulgarian general staff, heard of this,

THE ARMY TILLS

and promptly shut down on all exports. For two weeks not a thing moved out of Bulgaria, and when the two weeks were over there was a new man in charge of the German purchasing bureau in Sofia. The methods of the Prussian barrack-yard would not do south of the Danube. It took many a lesson to bring this home.

Austria and Hungary were two separate economic units in the war. When food was scarce in Austria it did not necessarily follow that the Hungarians would make good the deficiency. It took a special permit to export and import from and into Hungary, and the same rules were enforced by Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey in the case of all shipments made by civilians, so long as these had a hand in this inter-allied exchange of necessities and commodities.

Little need be said of the German purchasing centrals in Austria and Hungary. The war was not very old before these countries had nothing to spare. Thereafter, exchange was limited entirely to materials needed in the manufacture of arms and ammunition. Austria and Hungary continued to exchange medical supplies, chemicals, and machinery for food and the like, respectively. They also managed now and then to get a little of the food in Bulgaria and Turkey, though the latter country could sell food only on rare occasions. Constantinople continued to live on Roumanian wheat, until the total cessation of activity by the Russian Black Sea fleet

THE IRON RATION

made navigation in those waters possible for the Turks and brought wheat and other food from northern Anatolia.

The food secured by Germany in other markets was also under military control, as I have stated before. Exchange in this case depended even more upon reciprocity in kind than in the instances already cited. At one time the Swiss government was ready to close its borders against the export of food to Central Europe entirely. Nothing came of the intention. The German government informed the government at Bern that this would lead to an embargo on coal along the Swiss borders. France and Italy had no coal themselves, and Switzerland had to have fuel.

It has been said that the incident in question was staged for the purpose of illustrating what the position of the Swiss actually was. At any rate, they would have no coal, not so much as a shovelful, if to-morrow they refused to export to the Germans and Austrians dairy products and animal fats. The same is true of iron products and chemicals.

Holland is in the same position. Great Britain needs all the coal she can mine, and the Germans refuse to supply the little they can spare without getting something in exchange—dairy products, animal fats, vegetables, and fresh and preserved fish. Holland also gets her coal-oil and gasolene in that manner. Iron and steel and chemicals are other strong arguments in this scheme. Denmark is in exactly the same

THE ARMY TILLS

position, and when German gasoline and benzine are not available the Norwegian fishermen have to stay at home. For each gallon of these fuels, which Germany exports from the Galician and Roumanian oil-fields, the Norwegians are obliged to turn over so many pounds of fish. Sweden has no food to give for the coal and liquid fuel she gets from Germany, but exchanges them for wood pulp, certain specialty ores, and on rare occasions reindeer meat.

That this commerce is strictly military those interested know, of course. But they have given up splitting hairs over it, because there is no way out. Coal and iron products, to say nothing of chemicals and medicines, are things which the European neutrals must have, and this need warring Central Europe has held over them as a whip. Incidentally, this traffic has done much toward keeping up the rate of the German mark. Central Europe would have been bankrupted long ago were it not that the neutrals must buy what these states have for sale and must buy it at prices fixed by monopoly.

The need of coal and iron has been a far more efficacious discipline for the European neutrals than the German armies that have lain along their borders. That these countries have never combined for the purpose of throwing off this yoke is due to the influence of racial affinity—the sentiment upon which in the past has thriven Pan-Germanism. Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, rising simul-

THE IRON RATION

taneously, could overnight cause the defeat of the Germans and their allies. But the ties of blood and kinship militate against that step, despite the dislike felt in these countries for certain aspects of German political life.

XVII

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

TO the plow was yoked an ox and harnessed a horse. A tall and muscular woman was guiding it, while a small boy carried the whip. From the Isonzo front, not more than ten miles away, came the crash of heavy artillery.

Neither the woman nor the boy seemed to mind that war was so near. I concluded that they were from the village which I had just come through, bound for the front named. The inhabitants of that place had listened to the noise of battle for eighteen months and it was possible that now the crash of guns meant less to them than the sound of the vesper bell.

There was a tire blow-out. While the soldier-chauffeur was attending to that, I watched the woman draw furrows. Being somewhat of a farmer, I was interested in the quality of her work. It was good average plowing.

The plow continued to cut down one side of the field and up the other. The automobile did not interest the woman. She had serious business to attend to. War must have seemed to

THE IRON RATION

her a sort of folly, and fools all those connected with it—myself included. She was tilling the land to get something to eat for her brood and to raise the money for taxes which those idiots at the front would waste in powder and the like. Her “hees” and “haws” punctuated the rumble of artillery like words of command for the oxen in the trenches.

The woman behind the plow was a superb figure—the embodiment of nature herself.

I went on.

Toward evening I returned over the same road. The woman was still plowing, but now she had a little girl holding the whip. The sirocco had blown a heavy mist in from the Adriatic. Where the woman was plowing the vapors floated in layers of uneven density—the veils of evening. The plowers passed into them and out again, loomed now and then dwindled in the mist as the moods of light pleased.

It struck me that it would be worth while to have a few words with this woman. She was so close to the war and yet, seemingly, so far from it that almost anything she could say promised to have an unusual color.

“These people here are Slovenes, sir!” remarked my soldier-chauffeur when I had sought his advice. “They do not speak German, as a rule. But we can try.”

It was love’s labor lost. The woman spoke some Slovener words in greeting and I replied in Bulgarian, of which language I know a few words. The chauffeur was no better off.

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

I dug into a furrow with the tip of my shoe and said:

“Dobro!”

She nodded recognition of both my “remark” and appreciation of her work.

To show the woman that I knew what I was talking about, I took the plow out of her hands and drew a furrow myself. It was her turn to say:

“Dobro!”

The fact that she limited her conversation to this word, as I was obliged to do, showed that she was a woman of understanding.

When I was back at the road I shook hands with the woman and her child and hurried off to Adelsberg, where General Boreovic, commander of the Austro-Hungarian Fifth Army, expected me for dinner.

“Ah, she is a worker,” said the old veteran, as I mentioned the incident to him. “Her husband is dead, you know. Was killed in the war. She is a remarkable woman. I have talked to her several times. She is worth a dozen of anything in skirts you can find in Vienna, or anywhere else, for that matter.”

I thought so, too, and think so yet, and, *Deo volente*, I will picture the plow-woman better some other time.

In the Manfred Weiss works at Budapest thousands of women are engaged in the manufacture of ammunition. The little girls and older women who watched the infantry-ammunition machines did not greatly interest me.

THE IRON RATION

They were all neatly dressed and did no more than watch the mechanical contrivances that made cartridge-cases out of sheets of brass and bullet-casings out of sheets of nickel-steel.

In the shell department of the establishment I saw quite another class of women.

They were large and brawny and strong enough to handle the huge white-hot steel nuggets with ease. By means of a crane two of them would seize one of the incandescent ingots, swing it under the trip-hammer, and then leave the fate of the shell in the making to two others, who would turn the thing from side to side, while a fifth operated the hammer itself.

At the far end of the shed, in flame-raked gloom, other women of the same type were engaged in casting. The ladle was operated by them with a dexterity that showed that neither strength nor skill were lacking.

These daughters of Vulcan were stripped to the waist. Their labor seemed to be the only dress they needed. In fact, it never struck me that there was anything unconventional about this costume—the whole and total of which was a large leather apron and skirt of something that resembled burlap. Nor did they seem to mind me.

It is impossible to say to what extent man's place in labor was taken by woman in Central Europe during the war. On the farms the women had always done much of the hard work. They had been employed in large numbers in the factories, stores, and offices, so that it was



Photograph from Henry Ruschin

WOMEN CARRYING BRICKS AT BUDAPEST

A pathetic aspect of the policy "Business as Usual" inaugurated at the outbreak of the European War. Central European women worked hard before the war, however.



Photograph from Henry Ruschin

VILLAGE SCENE IN HUNGARY

These women and children struggled to keep food production close to normal, but failed.

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

generally a case of employing more women instead of surrendering to them departments which heretofore had been entirely in the hands of men. It is true that women were working on street-car lines as conductors, and in a few cases as drivers, and that more of them found employment in the railroad and postal service, but the work they did was well within the capacity of any healthy woman. Woman's work during the war was to have results quite foreign to those immediately in prospect.

The fact that women were employed in foundries and steel-works, in the manner stated above, is chiefly remarkable for the evidence furnished that woman is able to do much of the work for which in the past she has been thought unsuited, especially if her deficiency in bodily strength is discounted by the use of machinery. At the Weiss works I was told that the women doing heavy work with the aid of mechanical energy were in every respect the equal of the men who had done the same thing before the war.

The war, then, has demonstrated in Central Europe that the woman is far less the inferior of man than was held formerly. To that extent the status of women has been bettered. When a man has seen members of the frail sex fashion steel into shells he is thereafter less inclined to look upon that sex as a plaything which an indulgent Scheme provided for him. Over his mind may then flash the thought that woman is, after all, the other half of humanity—not only the mother of men, but their equal, not a mere

THE IRON RATION

complement of the human race, but a full-fledged member of it.

A little later I was the guest of Halideh Edib Hannym Effendi at her private school in the Awret Basar quarter of Stamboul, Constantinople. The Turkish feminist and promoter of education had asked me to take a look at the establishment in which she was training Turkish girls and boys along the lines adhered to in the Occident. She had arrived at the conclusion that the *medressi*—Koran school system—was all wrong, for the reason that it sacrificed the essential to the non-essential. Though her influence with the Young Turk government and the Sheik-ul-Islam was great, she had not asked that her experiments with Western education be undertaken at the expense of the public. Her father is wealthy.

Several teachers had been invited to the tea. Like Halideh Hannym they were “Young Turk” women, despite the fact that most of them still preferred the non-transparent veil—*yashmak*—to the transparent silk *büründshük*.

I commented upon this fact.

“The *yashmak* does indeed typify the Old Turkey,” said Halideh Hannym. “But is it necessary to discard it because one takes an interest in the things identified as progress? To the *yashmak* are attached some of the best traditions of our race; it comes from a period when the Turk was really great, when he was still the master of a goodly share of Europe—when he ruled, instead of being ruled.”

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

All of which was true enough.

I pointed out that the *büründshük*, however, was the promise that the Turkish woman would soon be able to look into the world—that seclusion would before long be an unpleasant memory. To that my hostess and her other guests agreed.

“The war has been a good thing for the Turkish woman,” I ventured to remark.

“It has been,” admitted Halideh Hannym. “As an example, the university has been opened to women. Three years ago nobody would have thought that possible. To-day it is *un fait accompli*. The world does move—even here.”

Halideh Hannym did not mention that she was largely responsible for the opening of the Constantinople University to women. Modesty is one of her jewels. Nor would she admit that her novels and her trenchant articles in the *Tanin* had much to do with the progress made in the emancipation of the Turkish woman.

“If Turkey is to be regenerated, her women must do it,” said Halideh Hannym, when we had come to speak of the necessity of better government in the Ottoman Empire.

That one sentence comprises at once the field of endeavor and the motive of the woman. She believes that there is much good in her race, but that its old-time position of conqueror and ruler over subject races had been fraught with all the dangers of ease and idleness.

“We must work—work—work,” she said. “The race that lies fallow for too long a time gives the weeds too much chance. Our weak-

THE IRON RATION

nesses and shortcomings are deep-rooted now. But I believe that the plowing which the race had during the present war will again make it a fertile field for the seeds of progress."

Not long before that Sultan Mahmed Réchad Khan V. had told me the same thing.

"We of the Orient are known to you Westerners as fatalists," remarked the old monarch in the course of the audience. "The fatalist is accepted to be a person who lets things drift along. This means that any fatalist may be no more than a lazy and shiftless individual. In our case that is not true. Our belief in the Fates—Kismet and Kadar—is to blame for what backwardness there is in the Ottoman Empire. But it will be different in the future. It is all very well to trust in God, but we must work."

I told Halideh Hannym that probably his Majesty had read some of her writings. My reason for doing this was largely the fact that as yet this gospel of work was little known in Turkey.

"That is not impossible," thought the woman. "At any rate, we must work, and it is the women of Turkey who must set the example. When the Turks have more generally embraced the idea that all there is worth while in life is labor, they will come to understand their non-Osmanli fellow-citizens better. I look upon that as the solution of the Ottoman race problems. Labor is the one platform upon which all men can meet. My objective is to have the races in the empire meet upon it. Turk, Greek, Armenian, and Arab will get along together only when they

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

come to heed that old and beautiful saying of the Persians, ‘How pleasantly dwell together those who do not want the ox at the same time.’ That means that each of us must have his own ox—work ourselves, in other words.”

And Halideh Hannym applies this to herself. There is no reason why she should write novels and articles to make money—she does not need it, so far as I know, if town houses and a country seat on the island of Prinkipo mean anything at all. Halideh Hannym works for the satisfaction there is in knowing that duty is done and done to the limit of one’s ability, and within that limit lies the seizing of one’s opportunity. Hers came with the war, and while others stood by and lamented she set to work and wrung from ungenerous man that which under the pressure of the times he thought unimportant. Halideh Hannym and her friends and co-workers gathered these crumbs, one by one, and then made a loaf of them, and that loaf is not small. Some future historian may say that the emancipation of the Turkish woman was due to the Great War. I hope that he will not overlook Halideh Edib Hannym Effendi.

The women of Central Europe have always worked hard, but at best they have been kept at drudgery. They have done what man would not do, as deeming it below his masculine dignity, or what he could not do. The result of this has not been a happy one for the women. The “lord of the household” has in the course of time come to look upon his wife as a sort of

THE IRON RATION

inferior creature, fit indeed to be the first servant in the house, but unfit to be elevated above that sphere. The rights of equality which he takes from his mate he generally bestows upon his daughters, and later he is inconsistent enough to have them enter the servitude of his wife. Thus it came that the majority of all women in Central Europe thought of nothing but the stomach of the lord and master, and when this was attended to they would put in their spare moments knitting socks.

The picture of the German *Hausfrau* may appeal to many. It does not to me. Nothing can be so disheartening as to spend an evening with a family whose women will talk to the accompaniment of the clicking of the knitting-needles. The making of socks should be left to machinery, even if they are intended to warm the "Trilbys" of the lord and master.

I am glad to report that a large crevasse was torn into this *Hausfrau* notion by the war. With millions of men at the front, the women had to stand on their feet, as it were. The clinging ivy became a tree. Though the ubiquitous knitting-needle was not entirely dispensed with, it came to be used for the sake of economy, not as the symbol of immolation on the altar of the *Herr im Hause*.

The woman who has fought for bread in the food-line is not likely to ever again look upon the breadwinner of the family with that awe which once swayed her when she thought of "his" magnanimity in giving her good-naturedly

WOMAN AND LABOR IN WAR

what she had earned by unceasing effort and unwavering devotion.

Thus has come in Central Europe a change that is no less great and sweeping than what has taken place in Turkey. All concerned should be truly thankful. The nation that does not give its women the opportunity to do their best in the socio-economic sphere which nature has assigned them handicaps itself badly. Not to do that results in woman being little more than the plaything of man, or at best his drudge, and, since man is the son of woman, no good can come of this. The cowed woman cannot but have servile offspring, and to this we must look for the explanation why the European in general is still ruled by classes that look upon their subjects as chattels. A social aggregate in which the families are ruled by autocratic husbands and fathers could have no other than an autocratic government. I believe that a pine forest is composed of pines, despite the fact that here and there some other trees may live in it.

The war has upset that scheme in Central Europe. While the labor of woman was valuable to the state, through its contributions to the economic and military resources of the nation, it also fostered in the woman that self-reliance which is the first step toward independence. Of this the plow-woman and the women in the steel-works are the factors and Halideh Hannym the sum. While the plow-woman and steel-workers were unconsciously

THE IRON RATION

active for that purpose, the Turkish feminist had already made it the objective of a spreading social policy.

What poor pets those women in the steel-mill would make!

XVIII

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

HARASSED by the shortage in everything needed to sustain life, plagued by the length of the war and the great sacrifices in life and limb that had to be made, and stunned by the realization that Germany had not a friend, anywhere, aside from her allies and certain weak neutrals, the German people began to take stock of their household and its management. It seemed to many that, after all, something was wrong.

I ran into this quite often in 1916.

During the Somme offensive in August of that year I was talking to a German general—his name won't matter. The man could not understand why almost the entire world should be the enemy of Germany. I had just returned to Central Europe from a trip that took me through Holland, Denmark, and parts of Norway; I had read the English, French, and American newspapers, with those of Latin Europe and Latin America thrown in, and I was not in a position to paint for the soldier the picture he may have been looking for. I told him that the outlook was bad—the worst possible.

THE IRON RATION

He wanted to know why this should be so. I gave him my opinion.

Not far from us was going on a drumfire which at times reached an unprecedented intensity. The general looked reflectively across the shell-raked, fume-ridden terrain. He seemed to be as blue as indigo.

"Tell me, Mr. Schreiner, are we really as bad as they make us out to be?" he said, after a while.

The question was frankly put. It deserved a frank reply.

"No," I said, "you are not. Slander has been an incident to all wars. It is that now. The fact is that your government has made too many mistakes. War is the proof that might is right. Your government has been too brutally frank in admitting that and suiting its action accordingly. Belgium was a mistake and the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a mistake. You are now reaping the harvest you sowed then."

My questioner wished to know if *sans* Belgium, *sans Lusitania* the position of Germany would be better.

That question was highly hypothetical. I replied that an opinion in that direction would not be worth much in view of the fact that it could not cover the actual causes of the war and its present aspects, of which the case of Belgium and the work of the submarine were but mere incidents.

"Seen objectively, I should say that the invasion of Belgium and the use of the submarine

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

against merchantmen has merely intensified the world's dislike of much that is German. I doubt that much would have been different without Belgium and without the *Lusitania*," was my reply. "This war started as a struggle between gluttons. One set of them wanted to keep what it had, and the other set wanted to take more than what it had already taken."

Not very long afterward General Falkenhayn, the former German chief of staff, then commander of the Ninth German Army against the Roumanians, asked a similar question at dinner in Kronstadt, Transylvania. He, too, failed to understand why the entire world should have turned down its thumb against the Germans. My reply to him was more or less the same.

A regular epidemic of introspective reasoning seemed to be on. At the Roumanian end of the Törzburger Pass I lunched a few days later with Gen. Elster von Elstermann. He also wanted to know why the Germans were so cordially hated. Gen. Krafft von Delmansingen, whose guest I was at Heltau, at the head of the Vörös Torony gorge, showed the same interest.

"It seems that there is nothing we can do but make ourselves respected," he said, tersely. "I am one of those Germans who would like to be loved. But that seems to be impossible. Very well! We will see! We will see what the sword can do. When a race has come to be so thoroughly detested as we seem to be, there is nothing left it but to make itself respected. I fear that in the future that must be our policy."

THE IRON RATION

I made the remark that possibly it was not the race that was being detested. The general is a Bavarian—at least, he was commanding Bavarian troops.

“So long as these shouters can make common cause with autocratic Russia, they have no reason to fasten upon the Prussians every sin they can think of. I am not one of those who think that everything in Germany is perfect. Far from it. We have more faults than a dog has fleas. Never mind, though! To lie down and beseech mercy on our knees is not one of these faults.”

I believe that Gen. Krafft von Delmansingen spoke for the army on that occasion without knowing it. What he said was the attitude of the vast majority of officers and men.

Shortly before I had interviewed Baron Burian, then Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, on that and related subjects. I will state here that he was the most professorly foreign minister I have met. His voice never rose above the conversational tone. Though a Magyar, he was evenness of temper personified.

“I suppose there is nothing we can do in that direction,” he said, slowly. “What the world wishes to believe it will believe. We cannot change that. Whether it is true or not has nothing to do with the cause and the outcome of this war. And what difference will it make in the end whether we are called barbarians or not? I know that a good many people resent what they say in the Entente newspapers, and

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

I suppose the Entente public resents a great deal of what is being said in our newspapers. That is a small matter. There is nothing to be done, for what we could do would be a waste of effort. Let them talk. No! There is nothing I wish to say in connection with that. Our position is quite defensible. But to defend it would merely stir up more talk. By the time the hostile American newspapers have taken care of all that is being said against us, they must have used so much paper that it would be a shame to get them to use more on refutation."

Dr. Arthur Zimmermann, at that time Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was more aggressive when I suggested the subject for the substance of an interview. Backing his position with certain documents that were found in the Belgian state archives, according to which there was some understanding between the British, French, and Belgians for the contingency of a German invasion, he held that Germany was entirely right in demanding access to France through Belgian territory. He was not sure, however, that doing this had been a good move politically. The military necessity for the step was something he could not judge, he said.

Doctor Zimmermann said that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a bad blunder. Responsibility for the act he would not fix, however. The thing was not within his province. So far as he knew, it had not been the intention to torpedo the ship in a manner that would cause her immediate sinking. If a ship was torpedoed in the fore or

THE IRON RATION

aft holds she would float for hours and might even be able to reach port under her own steam.

"There is a great deal of mania in this Germanophobe sentiment that is sweeping the world," he said. "For the time being, we are everybody's *bête noire*. The world must have somebody on whom it can pick. Right now we are that somebody. Quite recently, during the Boer War, it was Great Britain. During the Japanese War the entire world, Germany excepted, made common cause with the Japs against the Russians, forgetting somehow that this was a war of the yellow race against the white. To-day we are it. To-morrow it will be somebody else. It is always fashionable to hate somebody."

That was the cool, diplomatic view of it.

But the Central European public was more inclined to take the view of the officer I had met on the Somme front. It was chagrined, disappointed, grieved, stunned.

The question was asked whether the invasion of Belgium had been really necessary. Many held that the German general staff should have concentrated a large force on the Belgian border, with orders not to invade the country until the French had done so.

There can be no doubt that this would have been the better policy. The contention of the German government that the French contemplated going through Belgium and had for the act the consent of the Belgian government and the acquiescence of the British government will not

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

invalidate my assertion in the least. Granted that such an agreement had been really made for the purpose of giving the French army certain tactical advantages, it would be the policy of any wise and calm government to wait for the execution of the plan. There would be no Belgian question at all to-day if the Germans had given the French the chance they are said to have sought. That the French reached out for the German border *via* Belgium would not have made the least difference in the sum of military operations, since it was first a question of keeping the French army out of Germany, and, secondly, of defeating the French forces wherever met.

The few days gained, and the slight military advantages alleged to have been procured, were certainly not worth what Belgium was in the end to cost the Germans. This is all the more true when it is considered that the reduction of Liège and other Belgian fortifications might have never become a necessity, in view of the fact that the documents found in Brussels have never convinced me that the Belgian government was acting in bad faith.

It seems that many have overlooked the fact that, between tentative arrangements made by the Belgian general staff and the allied governments and an authorization by the Belgian parliament that war should be declared against Germany, there is a great difference. The former existed; the latter had yet to be obtained. In case it had been obtained, in order to give the French troops marching through Belgium the status they

THE IRON RATION

needed, there was still time for the Germans to do what they did, under martial conditions that would have declared the French troops in Belgium mere raiders, on the one hand, and Belgium a violator of her neutral status, on the other. Belgium permitting the use of her territory by French troops about to fall upon Germany would have been obliged to also admit German troops, or declare war against Germany. That case is so simple that few can understand it, as a rule.

That such might have been the initial events of the war began finally to dawn upon all thinking Germans. It occurred to many now that there was ample front in Alsace-Lorraine; so much, in fact, that the French succeeded in taking and holding quite a little of it. There was, also, Luxembourg.

Though mobilizations are like the avalanche that starts at the mountain-top and thereafter obeys but one law, gravity, it was not impossible for the German general staff to divert southward the troops bound for the Belgian border. A day might have been lost. But even that seems uncertain, since troops were needed along the Belgian border, anyway, in view of what Berlin claims to have known. No matter how the thing is looked at, in the end it resolves itself into the question whether or not there was a difference in meeting French troops in Belgium or on their own soil. It was the objective of the Germans to defeat the French army. Whether that was done in the line of the French fortifications along the Franco-Belgian border, as

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

came to pass, or whether that was done in the line of the fortifications along the German-Belgian border, could make little difference to a government and general staff able to think on its feet.

Since governments at war must of necessity take it for granted that only the men at the head of affairs have the right to think, this aspect of the invasion of Belgium has been but rarely treated in public print in Germany. I will say, however, that several military writers have attempted to speak on the subject, and have usually been called to task for their hardihood.

To-day the average German is not at all sure that "Belgium" was necessary. He has no interest in Belgium, differing in this from his industrial and commercial lords. Most men and women with whom I discussed the subject were of the opinion that "one Alsace-Lorraine is enough."

The greatest shock the German public received was the news that the *Lusitania* had been sunk. For a day or two a minority held that the action was eminently correct. But even that minority dwindled rapidly.

For many weeks the German public was in doubt as to what it all meant. The thinking element was groping about in the dark. What was the purpose of picking out a ship with so many passengers aboard? Then the news came that the passengers had been warned not to travel on the steamer. That removed all doubt that the vessel had not been singled out for attack.

THE IRON RATION

The government remained silent. It had nothing to say. The press, standing in fear of the censor and his power to suspend publication, was mute. Little by little it became known that there had been an accident. The commander of the submarine sent out to torpedo the ship had been instructed to fire at the foreward hold so that the passengers could get off before the vessel sank. Somehow that plan had miscarried. Either a boiler of the ship or an ammunition cargo had given unlooked-for assistance to the torpedo. The ship had gone down.

The defense made by the German government was based largely on points in international law that govern the conduct of raiding cruisers. But the submarine was not a cruiser. It could not save many lives under any circumstances.

People shook their heads and said nothing. It was best to say nothing, since to speak was treasonable.

Nothing weaned the German public so much away from the old order of government as did the *Lusitania* affair. The act seemed useless, wanton, ill-considered. The doctrine of governmental infallibility came near being wrecked. The Germans began to lose confidence in the wisdom of the men who had been credited in the past with being the very quintessence of all knowledge, mundane and celestial. Admiral Tirpitz had to go. Germany's allies, too, were not pleased. In Austria and Hungary the act was severely criticized, and in Turkey I found much disapproval of the thing.

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

While the greater part of the Central European public accepted that there had been some necessity for the sinking of the ship, seeing that she carried freight of a military character, there were many who thought that in such cases politics and not military necessity should govern conduct. These people were better politicians than those in the government. But the others were better militarists and militarism was in control, being seated more firmly as each day brought more enemies, open and potential. The case was much like that of a family that may have difficulties within, but which would set in concerted action upon any outsider who might think it well to intervene.

This was to be the fundamental quality of German public sentiment throughout the course of the war. As the ring of enemies grew stronger and tightened more upon the military resources of the empire, the public grew harder and harder. The pressure exerted being concentric, it grouped the German public closer and harder to its center—the government. It was no longer the absolute devotion of other years which the Germans brought their government—hardly that. It was the determination to win the war despite the government and despite what others thought and held of that government. The fact that government there must be is too clear to the German to make him act toward his *Obrigkeit* with the impetuousness that has characterized events in Russia, where this was possible only because for decades many there have held the

THE IRON RATION

view that the time of anarchical society was at hand.

This state of mind made possible the acceptance of the heavy sacrifices which were demanded by the war. The very private in the trenches felt that he would have to risk all against a world of enemies.

Self-pity in the individual leads usually to maudlinism. The trait is not foreign to German temperament. Self-pity in the aggregate is a totally different thing. It is the quality that makes martyrs of men, so long as there is an audience. It is sentiment minus all sickly self-indulgence, and that is fortitude—the thing that will cause men to adhere to an idea or principle even in the face of the stake at the *auto da fé*.

It was this spirit, also, that caused the German multitude to bear with patience the many deprivations and burdens due to the war.

In Austria things were slightly different. The Austrian-German is probably more of Celtic than of Germanic blood. He is more volatile. Great issues do not hold his attention long. He becomes easily a slave to habit.

To the Austrian-German the war was never more than a nuisance. It interfered with his business; above all, his enjoyments; it drove him from his favorite café and his clandestine lady-love. It upset life for him thoroughly. What was the preservation of the Austrian Empire to a man who shared that empire with Czech, Pole, Ruthene, Slovene, Croat, Italian, Bosniak Mussulman, and in a sense with the

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

Magyar and Roumanian? The feeling of race interest would have to remain foreign to such a man, just as it was a stranger to all the others who fought at his side. Of the ten races in the Dual Monarchy only the Slav group could understand one another without special study of the other's language. Czech, Pole, Ruthene, Slovene, Croat, and Bosniak could with little difficulty master one another's language. German, so far as it was not familiar in the form of military commands, was unknown to most of them. Magyar was a total stranger to Slav and German alike, and Italian and Roumanian meant nothing to any of these.

I remember philosophizing a bit at the execution wall of the fortress of Peterwardein in Hungary. To the left of me stood a little gallows—one of those peculiar strangulation implements they use in Austria-Hungary—descendant of the Spanish *garrote*, I believe. On the ancient brick wall were the marks left there by chipping steel bullets. Many a Serb seditionist had seen the light of day for the last time in that old moat. More of them were behind the grilled peepholes of the casemate. That morning two or three had died where I stood.

In that there was nothing unusual, perhaps. But on my right was a large poster, framed with the Hungarian national colors, red, white, and green. The poster drew attention to a certain paragraph of the treason laws. It defined treason poignantly, precisely.

I read the paragraph in German, concluded

THE IRON RATION

that the Hungarian said the same, surmised that the Slav languages in the country did not differ greatly from one another, found that Roumanian I could almost read, and saw that the Italian version said the same thing as the German. I suppose French had been left off the poster for the reason that the Austro-Hungarian inter-monarchical classes, which now use that language instead of Latin, as in the days of Marie Therese, did not need to have their attention drawn to the danger of sedition.

The gallows and execution wall seemed fit companions to that poster. One might not have missed the other when seeing the one, but still there was harmony between the two. People who do not understand one another, be that a question of language or temperament, have no business to live together. But the thing happens often in wedlock, and governments at peace and leisure say that it is perfectly feasible from the viewpoints of state interests.

I found that *Das Reich*—the empire—had no meaning to any member of the Austro-Hungarian group. But what held that conglomerate together? The Emperor-King.

Soon I found that nothing had changed in Austria-Hungary since the days when the Empress-Queen Marie Therese, with her infant son in her arms, and tears in her eyes and on her cheeks, had implored the Magyar nobles to come to her assistance against Frederick the Great. The Magyar nobles tore off their fur *kalpacks*, drew their swords, and cried:

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

"Moriamur pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa!"

That was still the mass psychology in the dual monarchy. The old Emperor-King called to battle, and that was enough. Later the new Emperor-King renewed the call, and it was still enough.

What the soldiers did in the trenches the civilian population did at home—a little half-heartedly at times, a little slovenly occasionally, but reliably at all times.

"We must help our Macedonian brothers. The Bulgars can no longer remain deaf to their prayers to be relieved of the oppression of the Serbs," said the Bulgarian Premier, Doctor Radoslavoff, to me in February, 1915.

In October of the same year he said during an interview:

"There is not enough room for two strong states on the Balkan peninsula. Yet there must be a strong state if the Balkan problem is to be eliminated. That strong state will be either Bulgaria or Serbia. We desire that it be Bulgaria. It will be Bulgaria when the Macedonians are permitted to join her. The time has come when they can do that. For that reason we go to war on the side of the Central Powers."

The two statements picture Bulgarian mass psychology exactly. The Bulgar wanted the Macedonian to be one with him nationally, as he is racially. He wanted the ancient Bulgar capital of Monastir to lie again within Bulgarland. With that in perspective he had driven the Turk

THE IRON RATION

from the peninsula; for that purpose he wanted to make the Serb small.

I found the same iron determination throughout Bulgaria and in all walks of life. The *shape* farmer, the shepherd in the *planina*, the monks at Rila Monastir, the fishermen at Varna, the city and towns people, were all for that idea. And in so stern a manner! To me the Bulgar will always be the Prussian of the Balkan. He is just as morose, just as blunt, and just as sincere.

I had occasion to discuss Turkey's entry into the European War with his Majesty, Sultan Mahmed Réchad Khan V., Ghazi, Caliph of all the Faithful, etc., etc., etc.

"They [the Allies] deny us the right to exist," said the old man. "We have the right to exist and we are willing to fight for that. I have led a very peaceful life always. I abhor bloodshed, and I am sincere when I say that I mourn for those who died with the ships [the crews of the battleships *Bouvet* and *Irresistible* whom I had seen go down with their ships on March 18th, an event which the Sultan had asked me to describe to him]. It must be hard to die when one is so young. But what can we do? The Russians want the Bosphorus, this city, and the Dardanelles. They have never belonged to the Russians. If there is anybody who has a better right to them than we have, it is the Greeks. We took these things from them. But we will not give them up to anybody without the best fight the race of Osmanli has yet put up."

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

Like Scheherazade, I then continued my account of the bombardment.

Said Halim Pasha, then Grand Vizier, expressed himself somewhat similarly. He was more diplomatically specific.

"The hour of Turkey was come," he said. "That conflagration could not end without the Allied fleet appearing off the Dardanelles, and the Russian fleet off the Bosphorus. That would be the smash-up of the Ottoman Empire. The Entente governments offered us guarantees that for thirty years Ottoman territory would be held inviolate by them. Guarantees—guarantees! What do they amount to! We have had so many guarantees. When Turkey gets a guarantee it is merely a sign that there is one more pledge to be broken. We are through with guarantees. We joined the Germans because they offered none."

All this in the most fluent Oxford English a man ever used. Said Halim is an Egyptian and somewhat directly related to the Great Prophet in the line of Ayesha.

Enver Pasha, the Prussian of the Ottoman Empire, Minister of War, generalissimo, Young Turk leader, efficiency apostle, Pan-German, and what not, told me the same thing on several occasions.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" he would say in sharp and rasping German. "We are not fighting for the Germans. We are fighting for ourselves. Mark that! They told us we'd be all right if we stayed neutral. Didn't believe it. Nonsense!"

THE IRON RATION

Russians wanted Constantinople. We know them. They can have it when we are through with it. It was a case of lose all, win all. I am for win all. Fired five thousand of the old-school officers to win this war. Will win it. Country bled white, of course. Too many wars altogether. First, Balkan War, Italian War. Now this. Better to go to hell with Germans than take more favors from Entente. Those who don't like us don't have to. Nobody need love us. Let them keep out of our way. May go down in this. If we do we'll show world how Turk can go down with colors flying. This is Turkey's last chance."

It took Talaat Bey, then Minister of the Interior, now Grand Vizier, to epitomize Turkey for me. He is a man of the plainest of people. When the Turkish revolution of 1908 came Talaat was earning 150 francs a month as a telegraph operator in Salonica. He saw his chance, and he and Dame Opportunity have been great friends ever since. At that, he is not a lean bundle of nerves like Enver Pasha, his great twin in Young Turkism. He is heavy, good-natured, thick-necked, stubborn, bullet-headed, shrewd.

"*Très bien, cher frère*" ("We meet on the same pavement"), he said to me in the best of Levantine French. "I can't say that this war is any too popular with some of our people. They have had enough of wars, and revolutions, and trouble, and taxes, and exploitation by *concessionnaires*, and all that sort of thing. I suppose I would feel

WAR AND MASS PSYCHOLOGY

the same way about it were I a Greek or an Armenian. But I am Turk. We Turks felt that the European War would be the last of us. The Russians want Constantinople and its waterways. The Italians want Cilicia, forgetting entirely that the Greeks have priority in claim. I suppose Thrace would have gone to the Bulgars when lot was cast for the shreds of the mantle of the Osmanli, and Great Britain would have taken what was left, which would have been not so little.

"When a man is up against that he does the best he can. That's what we are doing. It's a mighty effort, *cher frère*, but there is no way out. We Turks are not ready yet to bow to the audience. We would still remain in the play awhile. And we are willing to play accordingly. We have all confidence in the Germans. Some people don't like them. They are terrible competitors, I have been told. So far we have not done so poorly with them. We have abolished the capitulations. That is something for a start. When this war is over we hope to be more the masters of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles than we have been since the days of Grand Vizier Köprülü. It 'll be a hard row to hoe before the end is reached. But we will come out on top. After that we and the Germans will try to make something of our natural resources. We will build railroads and factories, irrigate wherever possible, and establish the finest agricultural schools to be found anywhere. But we will see to it that Turkey is developed for the

THE IRON RATION

benefit of the Ottoman. Tobacco monopolies and foreign public-debt administrations we hope to banish."

Such is the aim of the Turk. To speak of mass psychology in the Ottoman Empire is not possible, for the reason that it has more races than Austria-Hungary and no central personage to hold them together. The old Sultan is a myth to fully two-thirds of the Ottoman population. To the Greeks and Armenians he is no more than any other high official of the government.

XIX

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

I HAVE seen much comment on the increase of sexual laxness in the Central European states, owing to the influence of the war. Those who have written and spoken on the subject have, as a rule, proclaimed themselves handicapped by either prejudice or ignorance—two things which are really one.

Much breath and ink has been wasted on certain steps taken by the several German and Austro-Hungarian governments for the legitimization of natural offspring by giving the mother the right to set the prefix *Frau*—Mrs.—before her maiden name. I have also run across the perfectly silly statement that the Central European governments, in allowing such women the war subsistence and pension of the legitimate widow and children, were purposely fostering that sort of illicit relations between men and women for the purpose of repeopling their states. On that point not much breath need be wasted, for the very good reason that each child is indeed welcome just now in Central Europe, and that the government's least duty is to take care of

THE IRON RATION

the woman and child who might ultimately have been the wife and legitimate offspring of the man who lost his life in the trenches. Sex problems are the inevitable result of all wars in which many men lose life and health. I may also say that in other belligerent countries this problem has as yet not been dealt with half so intelligently and thoroughly.

Monogamy and polygamy are usually economic results rather than purely social institutions. A stay of nine months in Turkey showed me that polygamy in that country is disappearing fast, because the Turk is no longer able to support more than one wife. In the entire Bosphorus district, in which Constantinople lies and of which it is the center, there were in 1915 but seventeen Moslem households in which could be found the limit of four legitimate wives. Of the entire population of the district only seven per thousand Turks had more than one wife, so that, on the whole, legalized polygamy made a better showing in sex morality than what we of the Occident can boast of, seeing that prostitution is unknown among the Turks.

That the war increased illicit sexual intercourse in Central Europe is true, nor was that increase a small one. It did not take on the proportions, however, which have been given to it, or which under the circumstances might have been looked for.

In the first place, many of the slender social threads that restrain sex impulse in the modern state snapped under the strain of the war. Their

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

place was taken by something that was closely related to the Spartan system of marriage. Free selection was practised by women whose husbands were at the front. The men did the same thing. The water on the divorce-mill took on a mighty spurt—evidence that this looseness did not always find the consent of the other party, though often his or her conduct may not have been any better.

This is a case in which generalization is not permissible. The good stood beside the bad and indifferent, and reference to the subject might be dispensed with entirely were it not that public subsistence is closely related to sex morality.

War takes from his home and family the man. Though the governments made some provision for those left behind, the allowance given them was never large enough to keep them as well as they had been kept by the labor of the head of the family. So long as the cost of living did not greatly increase, the efforts of the wife and older children met the situation, but all endeavor of that sort became futile when the price of food and other necessities increased twofold and even more. When that moment came the tempter had an easy time of it. From the family had also been taken much of the restraint which makes for social orderliness. The man was away from home; the young wife had seen better times. Other men came into her path, and nature is not in all cases as loyal to the marriage vows as we would believe. In many cases the mother,

THE IRON RATION

now unassisted by the authority of the father, was unable to keep her daughters and sons in check.

War has a most detrimental effect upon the mind of the juvenile. The romance of soldiering unleashes in the adolescent male every quality which social regulation has curbed in the past, while the young woman usually discards the common sense of her advisers for the sickly sentimentalism which brass buttons on clothing cut on military lines is apt to rouse in the female mind. Soon the social fabric is rent in many places and governmental efforts at mending are hardly ever successful.

We have of this an indication in the remarkable increase in juvenile delinquency which marked the course of the European War. In thousands of cases the boys of good families became thieves and burglars. Even highway robbery was not beyond them, and, odd as it may seem, nearly every murder committed in the Central states in the last three years had a lone woman of wealth for a victim and some young degenerate, male or female, as perpetrator. In the cases that came to my notice the father or husband was at the front.

But apart from these more or less spontaneous failings of young men and women, there was the category of offenses in which external influence was the *causa movens*. Desperate need caused many to steal and embezzle; it caused many women to divest themselves of that self-respect which is decency and the glory of the *fille honnête*.

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

Nothing can be so cynical as the laws of social administration. That was shown on every hand by the war, but especially did it become apparent in the gratification of the sexual appetite by that class which has nothing but money. While the father and husband was at the front, fighting for the state, and heaping the wealth of the community into the coffers of a rapacious industrial and commercial class, his daughter and wife were often corrupted by that very wealth. Nor was it always bitter want that promoted the lust of the wealthy profligate. The war had shaken the social structure to its very foundations. So great was the pressure of anxiety that the human mind began to crave for relief in abandonment, and once this had been tasted the subject would often become a confirmed "good-time" fiend.

There was a certain war purveyor of whom it was said that he seduced a virgin once a week. The class he drew upon was the lowest. Most of his victims were factory-girls, and, such being the case, nobody thought much of it at a time when calamity had roused in all the worst qualities that may be wakened in the struggle for self-preservation. It was a case of the devil take the hindmost, and his Satanic Majesty did not overlook his chance.

For a few days these girls would be the paramours of their masters. When, finally, they saw themselves cast off in favor of a prettier face, they would for a while frequent cafés where they would meet the officers on leave and small fry of civil-

THE IRON RATION

ians, and not long after that they did business on the street with a government license and certificate showing that they were being inspected by the authorities in the interest of public health.

That was the usual career of one of these war victims. But the thing did not end there. The thousands who had grown rich on war contracts and food speculation began to tire of the very uninteresting sport of ruining factory-girls and shop-women. They reached out into those social classes in which refinement made a raid so much more delectable. To physical debauch had to be added moral and mental orgy. Taste had been stimulated to a degree where it demanded that social destruction should accompany lustful extravagance. And that only the woman of the better class could give. The gourmand became an epicure. Times favored him.

What proportions this state of affairs reached may be illustrated by the "personal" advertisements carried at one time by one of Vienna's foremost newspapers, the *Tagblatt*. Throughout the week that paper would carry from forty to ninety inches, single column, of personal ads., each of them requesting a woman, seen here or there, to enter into correspondence with the advertiser for "strictly honorable" purposes. On Sundays the same paper would carry as much as two whole pages of that sort of advertising. Soon the time came when often as much as a quarter of these ads. would be inserted by women who disguised a heartrending appeal to some wretch in whatever manner they could.

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

Emperor Charles deserves the highest credit for finally putting his foot down on that practice. The "personals" in the *Tagblatt* began to irritate him, and one day he let it become known to the management of the publication that further insertion of that sort of matter would lead to the heavy hand of the censors being felt. That helped. After that the *Tagblatt* ran only matrimonial advertising. Yet even that was not wholly innocuous. The daughter of a colonel was corrupted by means of it. I am glad to say that the old soldier took the law in his own hand. He looked up the man who had seduced the young woman and shot him dead in his tracks. The government had good sense enough to dispose of the case by having the colonel make a report.

To my own attention came, in Budapest, the case of a fourteen-year-old girl who had been sold by her own mother to a rich manufacturer. The woman had advertised in a Budapest newspaper that did business along the lines of the Vienna *Tagblatt*. The girl knew nothing of it, of course. There was a sequel in court, and during the testimony the woman said that she had sold her daughter to the manufacturer in order to get the money she needed to keep herself and her other children. Josephus mentions in his *Wars of the Jews* how a woman of Jerusalem killed, then cooked and ate, her own child, because the robbers had taken everything from her, and, rather than see the child starve, she killed it. He also mentions that the robbers left the house horror-struck. The war purveyor and food shark

THE IRON RATION

did not always have that much feeling left in them.

Poor little Margit! When my attention was drawn to her she was a waitress in a café in Budapest, and her patrons used to give her an extra *filler* or two in order that she might not have to do on her own account what she had been obliged to suffer at the behest of her raven mother. As I heard the story, the manufacturer got off with a fine, and the mother of Margit was just then sorting rags in a cellar, with tuberculosis wasting her lungs.

Society at war is a most peculiar animal—it is anarchy without the safeguards of that anarchy which fires the mind of the idealist; for that system and its free love would make the buying of woman impossible.

But there were sorts of sexual looseness that were not quite so sordid, which at least had the excuse of having natural causes as their background. Rendered irresponsible by sexual desire and the monotony of a poverty-stricken existence, many of the younger women whose husbands were in the army started liaisons, *Verhältnisse*, as they are called in German, with such men as were available. It speaks well for the openness of mind of some husbands that they did not resent this. I happen to know of a case in which a man at the front charged a friend to visit his wife. After I learned of this I came to understand that progress, called civilization, is indeed a very odd thing. The Spartans when at war used to do the same thing, and it was the practice of commanders

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

to send home young men of physical perfection in order that the women should beget well-developed children. The offspring was later known as *partheniæ*—of the virgin born. But the laws of the Spartans favored an intelligent application of this principle, while in Central Europe no regulation of that sort could be attempted.

An effort was made by the several governments to check this tendency toward social dissolution. For the first time in many years the police raided hotels. Now and then offenders were heavily fined. But authorities which in the interest of public health had licensed certain women were prone to be open-minded to practices due to the war. It was realized that the times were such that latitude had to be given; in the end it was felt that just now it did not matter how children were born. The state began to assume what had formerly been the duty of the father and proceeded with more vigor than ever against the malpractice of physicians. One of them, convicted on the charge of abortion, was given a two-year sentence of penal servitude.

It cannot be said, however, that the woman who had made up her mind to remain a loyal wife or innocent was not given ample protection. The state was interested in the production of children, but had little patience with illicit sexual intercourse that did not result in this. There is the theory that the child whose father does not take some loving interest in the mother is not of as much value as that which has been born in the “wedlock” of love. With that in view,

THE IRON RATION

the government took what precaution there was possible. The profligate and *roué* were given a great deal of attention, though little good came of this, since the times favored them entirely too much. But there is no doubt that the eyes of the law saw where they could see.

Food-lines were as a rule attended by policemen, whose duty it was to maintain order and keep off the human hyenas who were in the habit of loitering about these lines for the purpose of picking out women. That was well enough. But the policeman could not see these women home, nor prevent the man from surveying the crowd, making his selection, and later forcing his attentions upon the woman.

With the need for food and clothing always pressing, the ground was generally well prepared, and the public was inclined to be lenient in such matters anyway—as “war” publics have a knack of doing.

I had scraped up acquaintances with a number of policemen in the district in which I lived. Most of them I had met in connection with my investigation of food-line matters. They were all very fine fellows, and red blood rather than red tape was in their veins. The suffering of the women in the food-lines had made these men more human than is usual in their business.

“Another one of them has gone to the bad,” said one of the policemen to me one day, as he pointed out to me discreetly a rather pretty young woman who had come for her ration of potatoes. “A fellow, who seems rather well-to-

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

do, has been trailing her to and from this store for almost two weeks. I had my eye on him, and would have nabbed him quick enough had he ever spoken to the woman while in the line. Well, three days ago I saw the two of them together in the Schwarzenberg Café. The damage is done now, I suppose. You will notice that she has on a new pair of shoes. She must have paid for them at least one hundred and ten crowns."

I suggested that the shoes were not necessarily proof that the woman had done wrong.

"Under the circumstances they are," said the policeman. "Yesterday I managed to talk to the woman. She is the wife of a reservist who is now on the Italian front. The government gives her a subsistence of one hundred and twenty crowns a month. She has no other means. With two little children to take care of, that allowance wouldn't pay for shoes of that sort. It's too bad. She is the second one in this food-line this month who has done that."

Shortly afterward I learned of the case of a woman who had sold herself in order to provide food and fuel for her two children. She was the widow of a reserve officer who had fallen in Galicia. Her own pension amounted to one hundred and ten crowns a month, and for the support of the children she was allowed another one hundred crowns, I believe. The sum was entirely too small to keep the three, being the equivalent of, roughly, twenty-seven dollars, depreciation of the Austro-Hungarian currency considered.

THE IRON RATION

At that time life in Vienna was as costly as it is normally in the United States. While her husband had been alive the woman had led a very comfortable life. She had kept a servant and lived in a good apartment in the Third Municipal District. The thing that struck me in her case was that she had not taken the step before. It is extremely difficult to be virtuous on twenty-seven dollars a month when one has not known need before.

The many cases of that sort which I could cite would merely repeat themselves. I will make mention, however, of one which is due to what may be termed the psychology of the mass in war. In this instance it was not want that was responsible. Aggregates involved in war seem to sense instinctively that the violence of arms may draw in its wake social dissolution. The pathology of society is affected by that in much the same manner as is evident in other organisms when a change is imminent or pending. A period of relaxation sets in, which in the case of the human aggregate manifests itself in sexual looseness.

In various parts of Serbia I had had occasion to notice that the women gave themselves readily to the invading soldiers. In the Austrian capital I ran into the same thing, though there was at that time no danger of invasion.

Time lying heavy on my hands when I was not at a front, or occupied with some political situation in one of the Central European seats of government, I decided to pass some of it by tak-

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

ing piano lessons. I made the necessary arrangements with a master of the instrument near the Kärntner Ring. On the three half-hours a week which I took from the *maestro* I was preceded on two by a pretty young woman greatly gifted musically. Her parents were well off, so that it was not a question of getting a "good time" in the only manner possible.

After a while the young woman failed to appear for her lessons. The *Tonmeister* wanted to know the reason for this. Confused and conflicting answers being all he received, he made up his mind that something was wrong. The poor old man had dealt with nothing but music all his life, and was delightfully ignorant of the ways of the world. He asked my advice. Should he inform the parents of the student?

After I had ascertained that his responsibility as teacher was not weighted by friendship or even acquaintance with the girl's family, I suggested that he confine himself to his proper province by notifying the student that failure in the future to put in appearance at her hour would result in a report of that and past delinquencies to the parents.

A very emotional interview between teacher and student resulted. By this time the girl had realized the folly of her conduct and seemed truly repentant. Being much attached to the old teacher, she made a clean breast of it. Her excuse was most interesting.

"You see, dear master," she said, "these are war times. I thought that it wouldn't matter

THE IRON RATION

much. If the Russians came to Vienna it might happen anyway."

There is used in the German army a word that comprises every rule of sex conduct to which the soldier is subject, or ought to be—*Manneszucht*—the moral discipline of the man. Infraction of this rule is severely punished in all cases, though the ordinary soldier may under it cohabit with a woman by her consent. To the officer this privilege is not given, however, it being assumed that as the instrument of military discipline he must be proof against many demands of nature and be in full control of himself at all times. The German officer who would violate a woman in an occupied territory fares badly, and the code forbids that he enter into liaison with a woman of the enemy. Nor may he visit the army brothels which now and then are established by the authorities.

I do not mean to infer that the German army officer always and invariably adheres to these rules. But he does this generally. The abstinence thus practised reflects itself in that unqualified devotion to duty for which the German officer is deservedly famous. It tends to make of him, for military purposes, a sort of superman. He comes to regard the curb he sets upon himself as entitling him to despise the weaklings who satisfy their desires. In the course of time he extended the fine contempt that comes from this to his allied brothers-in-arms in Austria and Hungary, who were deplorably lax in that respect, despite the regulations.

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

Though I do not especially deal with the latter subject, I must mention it here as a preamble to a certain experience I had one night in Trieste. The experience, on the other hand, showed to what extent war may influence the conduct of men whose station and opportunities might cause one to believe that they were above surrendering to sexual laxness.

In the "Hall" of the Hotel Excelsior of Trieste were sitting at café tables some sixty Austro-Hungarian officers from the Isonzo front who on that day had been furloughed from the trenches for a certain purpose. At the tables sat also a fourscore of women who for the time being were the sweethearts of the officers. High revelry was on. The windows of the room, with all others along the Trieste water-front, had been well blinded, so that no beam of light fell into the inky blackness without through which a fierce *borea*—northern wind—was just then driving a veritable deluge.

The room was well heated and lighted. I had on that very day walked off a sector on the Carso plateau, and found a most pleasant contrast between the cold and muddy trenches and the "Hall." It was exceedingly snug in the place. And there was the inevitable gipsy music.

Across the bay, from Montfalcone, came the sound of an Italian night drumfire, and in the room popped the bottle of Paluguay champagne—the French products being just then hard to get.

There were three other war correspondents

THE IRON RATION

in the party. An Austrian general-staff man was in charge. The officer was of the strait-laced sort and did not sanction the conduct of his colleagues. But then he was at headquarters at Adelsberg and could go to Vienna almost as often as he liked. The others were poor devils who had been sitting in the Carso trenches for months and had now come to Trieste to have a good time, even if that meant that next morning the pay of several months would be in the pocket of the hotel manager and in the hands of some good-looking Italo-Croat woman.

It was not long before we had at our table some of the "ladies." One of the war correspondents had taken it upon himself to provide us with company. From that company I learned what the frame of mind of the officers was. After all, that attitude was simple enough. Each day might be the last, and why not enjoy life to-day when to-morrow there might be a burial without coffin, without anything except the regrets of comrades? What was etiquette under such circumstances? The champagne helped them to forget, and the women, though their conversation might be discouragingly banal, were, after all, members of the other sex. One of the women was able to take a very intelligent survey of the situation. She was capable of sensing real sympathy for these men. I learned that she had lost her husband in the war. It was the same old story. She had found the small pension for herself and the allowance for her boy entirely insufficient, was not minded to do poorly

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

paid hard work, and had concluded that it was easy for the well-to-do to be decent. The poor had to do the best they could in these days of high prices.

Out on the Carso the bombardment progressed, satisfactorily, I presume, as the next official *communiqué* of the Italian government would say. The champagne bottles continued to pop. Men and women drank to one another's good health, the former oblivious, for the time being, that this might be the last good time they would ever enjoy.

It strikes me that not much fault can be found with this, so long as we are human enough to allow those whom we are about to execute for the commission of some crime to choose their last breakfast—or is it supper? To be detailed into the advanced trenches was generally no better than to be sentenced to death.

Only those who have been constantly threatened by the dangers of war can realize what state of mind these men were in. Nothing mattered any more, and, nothing being really important, the pleasures of the flesh were everything. It was so with the little music student I have mentioned. I could not reach a harsh judgment in either case, despite the picture of Prussian *Manneszucht* before my eyes. At the same time, I am not ignorant of the fact that sleek communities living in peace and plenty cannot be expected to understand the moral disintegration which the dangers of war had wrought in this instance.

THE IRON RATION

I made the acquaintance of similar conditions in Berlin and other cities of the Central states. Being a matter-of-fact individual, I cannot say that they shocked me. The relations of cause and effect cannot be explained away, much as we may wish to do it. With some fourteen million men taken away from their families, whose sole support they were in the vast majority of cases, nothing else was to be expected. It speaks well for mankind in general that the resulting conditions were not worse. The responsibility involved falls rather upon those who brought on the war than upon the men and women who transgressed.

And that responsibility was not shirked in the Central states. Before the war broke out there had already been held very liberal views on illegitimacy. The children of Hagar were no longer ostracized by the public, as, for instance, they are in the United States and other countries where social "justice" is still visited upon those whose misfortune it is to have been born out of wedlock. In Germany and Austria-Hungary it was held that a man is a man for all that.

Small wonder, then, that during the winter of 1916, when the crop of "war" babies was unusually large—formed, in fact, more than 10 per cent. of the increase in population—the several Central European governments should decide to give such children and their mothers the allowances provided for the wives and widows of soldiers and their children. The German state governments, that of Prussia excepted, also

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

abolished the "illegitimate" birth certificate and gave the unwed soldier wife or widow the right to use the designation *Frau*—Mistress—instead of, as heretofore, *Fräulein*, or Miss.

This measure was a fine example of humanness, seeing that otherwise many thousands of mothers of "war" babies would have been obliged to go through life with the stigma of illegitimacy branding both woman and child. It is somewhat typical of Prussia that its government should be willing to support illegitimate "war" babies and their mothers and yet deny them the comforts of social recognition, when their number was no less than two hundred thousand.

There came up, in connection with this legislation, the question of whether the offspring of unmarried women whose paramours were not in the military service should receive the same liberal treatment. A great deal of opposition was voiced by the clergy and other conservative elements. It was argued that extension of this benefit to all would encourage a general recourse to free love.

But the legislators and governments were less short-sighted. The legitimizing acts were so framed that they included all children, no matter who their fathers were. It was held that it would be absurd to expect the millions of women whom the war had robbed of their husbands, or the chance of getting one, to lead a life of celibacy. Nature would assert itself, and if the subject was not now dealt with in a rational manner, it

THE IRON RATION

would have to be disposed of later when conditions might be less favorable.

There were certain examples to be recalled. At the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War the South German states, being the hardest hit in losses of male population, adopted laws according to which any man with the necessary means could legitimately admit into his house as many women as he cared to support. Though well-intentioned, the law shared every defect which emergency legislation is apt to be afflicted with. The men able to support more than one wife were generally advanced in years, so that the very condition which the state had hoped to meet gave rise to chaos. It had not been the intention to afford the pleasures of the seraglio to the wealthy, but to take the best possible account of a social emergency.

This was borne in mind when the Central states governments dealt with a similar condition in 1916, the factors of which were these: There had been killed in action, crippled for life, and incapacitated by disease nearly five million men who had gone to the fronts in the very prime of life. That meant a serious loss to a community—considering Germany and Austria-Hungary a single unit in this respect—which then had approximately twenty million women in the state of puberty. Reduced to statistics, the situation was that there were only four men of marriageable age for every five women. It was estimated at the time that before the war was over these odds would go to three to five. Recent casualty

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

statistics show that this stage has been nearly reached.

I must make reference here to the fact that the normal and healthy woman finds life with the physically impaired man a torture. A good many cases of that sort have come to my attention. One of them is so typical of all others that I will give its details.

At a certain Berlin drawing-room I made the acquaintance of a charming young woman of the better class. I may say that she is a writer of considerable merit.

A few months before the outbreak of the war she had married a professional man of quality. When the mobilization came he was drafted as an officer of the reserve.

For months at a time the two did not see each other, and when finally the man returned home for good one leg had been amputated at the knee and the other a little above the ankle. The woman did what most women would do under the circumstances. She received the man with open arms and nursed him back to complete recovery.

Soon it was evident that all was not well with the relations of the two. The woman tried to forget that her husband was a cripple for life. But the harder she tried the more grew a feeling of repulsion for the man. Finally, she decided to live alone.

It would be very simple to label the woman a heartless creature. But it would be quite as unjust. The foes of even that small portion of

THE IRON RATION

realism which the most logical of us are able to identify may be inclined to take the stand that sex has little to do with what is called love. And yet in the healthy race it forms the social *force majeure*. It is not for me to decide whether the woman in question did well in leaving the man. After all, that is her own affair—so much more her own affair since the man, as yet not reconciled to his great misfortune, began to plague her with most vicious outbreaks of jealousy, when as yet he had no reason for it.

The man is to be pitied by all, and unless he is able to calm his mind with the solace that comes from philosophical temperament, it would have been far better were he among the dead. He may in the end find another mate; but, seen from the angle of natural law, it must be doubted that the pity, which would have to be the great factor in such a love, would in any degree be as valuable as the sexual instinct which caused the other woman to go her own ways. Idealism and practice are always two different things. The former is the star that guides the craft, while practice is the storm-tossed sea.

More than fifty thousand Russian prisoners-of-war petitioned the Austrian government to be admitted to citizenship in the country that held them captive. Many of these men had been sent into the rural districts to assist the farmers. Others were busy around the cities. They had come to be reconciled with their lot, had acquired a fair working knowledge of the language, and association with the women had led to the

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

usual results. The crop of "war" babies increased.

The Russians were willing to marry these women, but under the law could not do so. Hence the petition for admission to the usual civil rights. The Austrian government recognized the situation, but in the absence of the necessary legislative authority could do nothing to admit the Russian to Austrian *Staatsangehörigkeit*. Yet it was eager to do that. The new blood was needed.

Travel about the country has often brought to my attention that in certain districts inter-marriage for centuries had led to degeneration. Goiter, one of the first signals of warning that new blood must be infused in the race, was prevalent. Scientists had drawn attention to this long before the war. But there was nothing that could be done.

The Russian prisoners-of-war came to serve as the solution of the problem. Their offspring were unusually robust, and some cranium measurements that were made showed that the children were of the best type mentally.

A state which was losing men at a frightful rate every day could not be expected to view this increase in population with alarm. So long as the mothers were Austrian all was well from the political point of view, since it is the mother usually who rears the patriot. The Russians, moreover, soon grew fond of the institutions of Austria, and gave return to their own people hardly any thought. Conversation with many

THE IRON RATION

of them demonstrated that, on the contrary, they were not anxious to go home. Russia was then still the absolute autocracy, and these men were not minded to exchange the liberal government of Austria for the despotism they knew.

I may state here that the Austrian government, serving in this instance as the example of all others in Central Europe, had done its level best to promote this very thing. On several trips to prison camps I visited the schools in which the Russian prisoners were being taught German. Thousands of the men were thus given their first chance to read and write, and to the more intelligent was apparent the irony of fate that caused them to read and write German instead of their own language. No more deliberate attempt to win friends could have been devised and executed. Small wonder that on one occasion a Russian working detachment employed in road-making on the Italian front rushed to the assistance of the Austrians who were being overwhelmed, and cut down the last of their allies with their spades and picks.

To what extent Russian blood has been infused in the rural population of Austria and Hungary is at present entirely a matter of conjecture. The same applies to Germany, though I must state that in this case the number cannot be so great.

Dreary as the picture is, it is not without its brighter spots. The mixture of blood which has occurred in many of these countries will improve the human stock. And who would care

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

to gainsay that governments are not in the habit of looking at populations from that angle—the angle of stock? None will admit it, of course, they may not even be conscious of the fact that they hold this view. But so long as governments are interested more in quantity than in quality of propagation they cannot easily clear themselves of the suspicion. I am not at all sure that it is not better thus.

I have so far treated the post-bellum aspect of sex morality entirely from the position of the man. Women will ask the question: What do the women think of it?

That depends somewhat on conditions and circumstances.

“When one is forty, one is satisfied with being *madame*,” said a Hungarian lady to me once, when the subject had been discussed. She meant that the woman of forty was content with being the head of a household.

Such an attitude takes a breadth of view altogether unknown in the Anglo-Saxon world. I found it often in Central Europe, especially in Austria, where one day were pointed out to me two couples who not so very long before had changed mates by mutual consent on the part of all four concerned. One of the husbands is a rich banker, and the other, his best friend by the way, is also well off. The double pair go to the same café, sit at the same table, and their friends think nothing of it. They are regularly divorced and married, of course.

While elsewhere in Central Europe the same

THE IRON RATION

easy view is not taken, it is a fact, nevertheless, that nowhere much puritanical strait-lacedness is to be encountered. I happen to know a certain successful diplomat who closed both eyes to his wife's infatuation for a young naval officer. The wife was young and her husband was past middle age. Rather than lose the woman and have a scandal besides, the diplomatist applied to himself what he had so often applied to others—the deception there is in self-restraint.

The three of them got along well together. Often I was the fourth at table. While the diplomatist and I would smoke our cigars and sip our coffee, the two would sit side by side on the ottoman and hold intimate converse. But in Europe it is considered tactless to speak of such matters.

There will be heartache, of course. Many a good woman will find herself displaced by a younger one. But that will not be without some compensation. The husband who would desert his mate because the charms of youth have flown may not be worth keeping. It may even be an act of mercy that he has rekindled his affection at some other shrine. The forsaken wife may have grown very weary herself of the life conjugal.

In Protestant Germany the readjustment will be easier than in Catholic Austria and Hungary. In the latter countries much double-living will result, and that means that more women will have to sacrifice more self-respect. That is the worst part of it.

SEX MORALITY AND WAR

But, again, the *légère* views of Central Europe come into play. So long as the man has sense enough to keep his "war" wife in the background, nobody will take offense, and the legal wife may not mind. Officially, the paramour will not exist. As soon as she has children she will be a "Mrs." in her own right, and I suppose that many will not wait that long before changing "*Fräulein*" into "*Frau*."

There is no doubt that the condition is unjust to two women at the same time. But there seems to be no escape from it. Ministers of the gospel have already roundly condemned what seeming sanction the government has given to illicit intercourse. But these good men are theorists, while the government is practical—practical for the reason that a great social problem has to be met in the best manner possible. It is far better to give the thing such aspects of decency as is possible rather than to encourage the growth of the social evil into proportions that might for all time impair the health of the race. Students of the social evil generally agree, throughout Europe at least, that its prime causes are economic. Communities in which the man, by reason of small income, is not able to establish a household early in life have not only the greatest number of loose women, but also the greatest number of free-living bachelors.

The problem, then, has an economic side. In the instance here under scrutiny, the economic side is that more women than ever before must earn their own living in Central Europe to-day.

THE IRON RATION

The women will readily do that, so long as society will not entirely deny them the company of the man or place upon such company the stigma that generally attaches to it. Without such privileges many of these women—nature decrees ironically that they should be physically the best of the race—would take to vice in such numbers that society would lose more by being ungenerous than by taking a common-sense view of the problem it has to face.

But logic in such matters is no balm of Gilead. The young married woman will be able to compete with the “surplus”; the older ones, I fear, will not. To them the war will be the thing of the hour, long after the grass has grown over the trenches, long after the work of reconstruction shall have healed the economic wounds.

There will be many who can truly say, “I lost my husband in the war.” And the worst of it is that they will not be able to say this with the tenderness that was in the heart at the departure for the field of battle.

XX

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

DURING the last three years and a half the political economy of Germany and her allies has strongly resembled that in vogue among certain South Sea Islanders, who are supposed to make a living by taking in one another's washing. The same money has been making the rounds on one of the oddest economic whirligigs mankind has so far seen.

The war has been carried on by means of funds derived mostly from war loans. By means of them Germany has so far raised, roughly, \$19,800,000,000, and Austria-Hungary \$8,600,000,000, making a total of \$28,400,000,000. In addition to that the two countries have spent on the war about \$2,300,000,000 derived from other sources—taxation, indemnities levied in occupied territories, and property here and there confiscated.

Within my scope, however, lie only the war loans.

The interest on the German war loans so far made amounts to \$762,000,000 per year. To the German public debts the loans have added \$293

THE IRON RATION

per capita, or \$1,082 for each producer in a population which the war has reduced to about 67,500,-000 fit individuals. Each wage-earner in Germany will in the future carry a tax burden which in addition to all other moneys needed by the government will be weighted every year by \$43.28 interest on the present war loans.

Austria-Hungary's load of interest on war loans will amount to \$344,000,000 annually. The burden is \$204 per capita, or \$816 for each wage-earner, out of a population which war losses have cut down to about 42,200,000. The annual interest each Austro-Hungarian bread-winner will have to pay on the war loans is \$32.64, and in addition he must provide the revenues which his governments will need to operate.

This means, of course, that the cry for bread will be heard long after the guns thunder no more. It must be borne in mind that the average yearly income of the wage-earner was a scant \$460 in Germany, and \$390 in Austria-Hungary. The war loan interest so far in sight will constitute about 9.3 per cent. and 8.2 per cent. respectively—no small burden when it is considered that all other revenues needed by the government must be added to this.

But the bitter cup of economic losses due to the war is by no means full with these figures. The Germans have so far lost, killed in action and dead of wounds, fully 1,500,000 able-bodied producers, and have at this time to care for about 900,000 men, of whom one half is totally incapacitated and the other half partly so. The

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

Austro-Hungarian figures are 650,000 men dead, and 380,000 totally or partly crippled. In other words, Germany has lost 2,300,000 able-bodied men, and Austria-Hungary 1,030,000. It may well be said that those dead can no longer figure in the economic scheme, because they consume no longer. On the other hand, each of these men had another twenty years of useful life before him. This long period of production has now been lost, and two decades must elapse before the Central states will again have as many producers as they had in 1914. Their propagation has also been lost, though, with the women as strong numerically as before, this loss will probably have been made good within ten years.

Before treating further of the effects of war loans and their influence upon the body politic, I will examine here how these loans were made, in what manner they were applied, and what the system of economy was to which the transaction gave birth.

The figures I have cited may well suggest the question:

How was it possible under such conditions to make war loans?

The superficial reply to that would be:

By raising the money in the country—inducing the people to subscribe to the loans.

The reply has no value, since it does not disclose how the necessary money was made available. The funds invested in the war loans were a part of the national capital, not a portion of

THE IRON RATION

the national wealth, the term wealth standing for the natural resources of a community. But capital is the surplus of production, and production results only from applying labor to natural resources; for instance, by tilling the soil, mining coal and ore, and engaging in the conversion of the less useful into the more useful, as is done in industry. A surplus of production is possible only, however, when consumption falls below production, for that which is left over of the thing produced makes the surplus. This surplus is capital.

Incomplete figures which I was able to gather in 1916 showed that before the war the average wage-earner of Central Europe had produced and consumed in a ratio of 55 against 48, so far as the scale of pay and cost-of-living showed. The difference of 7 points represented the amount of money he could save if he wanted to do that. The 7 points, then, were the actual increase in the national capital.

In the winter of 1916-17 the figures had undergone a remarkable change. Wages had been increased to 70 points, while the cost of food had risen to 115 points as against 48 formerly. In other words, while the wage-earner was getting 15 points more for his labor, he was paying 67 points more for his food and the necessities of life. The place of the 7 positives in capital production had been taken by 45 negatives, which meant that the national capital of Central Europe had fallen below static, the point where neither increase nor reduction takes

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

place, by 38 points. The national capital had been decreased 38 per cent., therefore. That much of all present and former surplus production of the two states had been used up in the pursuit of the war.

Governments deem it a safe policy to issue in times of financial stress three times as much paper currency as they have bullion in the vaults. One million in gold makes three millions in paper with that formula. This had been done in Germany and Austria-Hungary to quite an extent by the end of 1916. For every million of gold in the vaults there was a million of *bona fide* paper money. That was well enough. The currency system of the United States adheres to that principle in times of peace even. But upon the same million of metal there had been heaped other paper currency which carried the promise of the government that on the given date it would be redeemed for gold or its equivalent. This method of national finance is known as inflation. It was this inflation that caused the wage-earner to show in his own little budget a deficit of 38 points.

Why the government should have inflated its currency in that manner is not so difficult to understand as it may seem. From its own point of view, the wage-earner had to be lashed into greater effort if the moneys needed for the war were to be available and if the food and material consumed by the army were to be produced. The more the consumer had to pay for what he required to sustain life the harder he had to work. His deficit of 38 points was the yoke

THE IRON RATION

under which he labored for the army in the field, which was consuming without producing anything. These 38 points were only 17 points less than the 55 which had represented his income before the war—in round terms every two wage-earners in Central Europe were supporting in food, clothing, munition, and ammunition a soldier at the front. It could not be otherwise since two political aggregates having then approximately, with the women included, twenty-five million wage-earners, were keeping under arms about ten million soldiers, and were meanwhile providing the heavy profits made by the war purveyors.

Though the 38 points were a deficit, the producer-consumer was not allowed to look at them in that manner. It was his task to cover this deficit. This he did by paying more for his food and necessities, through a channel which the inflated currency had filled with water in the familiar stock-jobbing phrase. The middlemen who owned the barges in the channel were taxed by the government on their war profits, but enough was left them to preserve interest in the scheme of war economy, a friendly act which the middlemen reciprocated by generous subscriptions to the war loans.

The first, second, and third war loans in Central Europe were subscribed to with much, though later dwindling, enthusiasm. Patriotism had a great deal to do with their success. Real money was required by the government, moreover. Bank accounts, government securi-

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

ties, sound commercial paper, and savings deposits were turned over. The loans made later were devoid of many of these features. Those who bought war-loan certificates did so because it was necessary for one reason or another, and many of the war bonds obtained in the first loans were converted. The war and all that pertained to it was now entirely a matter of business with those who could subscribe. The poor were tired of any aspect of war.

The government could not prevent their being tired, but it could see to it that indirectly the masses supported the war policy, no matter what they thought. That was not difficult. The high cost of living took from the producer-consumer what the government needed, and there is no system of discipline that is quite so efficacious as keeping a man's nose to the grindstone.

Sleek bankers used to inform me that there was much prosperity in the country. There was from their point of view. The margin between the wages paid the producer and the prices asked of the consumer was great enough to satisfy the interested parties, government and middleman alike. The war loans had hardly been closed when a good share of them was again in circulation. The whirligig of war economy was spinning lustily, and there was no danger of things going wrong so long as the producer-consumer was kept well in hand.

How the war loans made the rounds is quite interesting. It is the closest approach to perpetual motion I have come across.

THE IRON RATION

Since the Central states could buy in foreign countries only by means of special trade agreements that called for an exchange in commodities rather than for the medium of exchange, the money raised by the war loans remained within the realm. Much of it went to makers of arms and ammunition, of course. In their case a million marks—I am using this small amount as a unit only—would lead to the following results: To the manufacturer would go 60 per cent. of the total and to labor 40. Subdivided these shares paid for raw material, plant investment, operation expenses, and profits so large that the government could impose a tax of 75 per cent. without making it impossible for the manufacturer to subscribe to the next loan. Labor, on the other hand, found itself barely able to sustain life, and if a few marks were saved by some, little or nothing could be bought for them. The man who was earning 70 marks a week, instead of 55, was paying for his food and necessities 115 instead of 48 marks—an economic incongruity at first glance, but perfectly feasible so long as those affected could be induced to live on about 85 per cent. of the ration needed to properly nourish the body, and had given up entirely the comforts of life. That scheme left him hope for better times as the only comfort. No matter how often the money of the war loans rushed through his hands, none of it ever stuck to them.

Before long it was plain that in this fashion the Central Powers could keep up the war forever. Their financial standing in foreign countries need

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

not worry them so long as they could not buy commodities in them. To be sure, the public debt was increasing rapidly, but the very people to whom the government owed money were responsible for that money. If bankruptcy came to the state they would be the losers, and that responsibility increased as their wealth increased. Capital and government became a co-operative organization, and both of them exploited the producer-consumer, by giving him as little for his labor as he would take and charging him as much for the necessities of life as he would stand for—and that was much. When now and then it seemed necessary to placate the producer-consumer, he would be told that in the interest of the Fatherland the government was compelled to do what it did. But the necessity for this came not often. The small man was generally overjoyed when the government was able to announce that the war loan had been a success or had been over-subscribed. That is all he wanted to know, so long as he was not required to go to the front. The success of the war loan meant that he would have work—and live to see the end of a war which everybody claimed had been forced upon the state.

It is certain that the Central states governments would have been bankrupt long ago had they been able to buy in the foreign market *ad libitum*, though in that case the foreign trade connections would have also seen to it that war loans were made to the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. There is no doubt at all that

THE IRON RATION

a Germany permitted to buy abroad would have later been less able to organize herself as efficiently economically as she did when her financial strength was still unimpaired for internal purposes. To this extent the swift descent of the British blockade is one of the gravest errors booked on the debit side of the Entente's politico-military ledger. Absolutely nothing was gained in a military sense by shutting the import door of the Central states. Far-seeing statesmen would have allowed Germany to import all she wanted and would then have seen to it that her exports were kept to a minimum, so far as the shortage of man-power in the country did not automatically bring about that result.

As it was, the Central states supplanted and substituted right and left, made new uses of their own natural resources, and fitted themselves for the long siege at a time when doing that was still easy. The British blockade, if applied in the winter of 1915-16, would have had effects it could not hope to attain in the winter of 1914-15, when almost any rational being knew that to starve out the Central states was not to be thought of. The Central states would have continued to live very much as before, and by the end of 1915 the governments would have been obliged to shut down on imports of food for the civilian population if the gold reserve was not to be exhausted completely, as would have been the case if exports could not balance imports to any extent. Production and consumption would then not have been as well organized as they

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

were under the auspices of the premature blockade, and the downfall for which the Entente has until now vainly hoped, and which will remain the greatest *spes fallax* of all time, would then have surely come. That bolt was shot too soon by Great Britain.

Though the Central governments were fully aware of this, as some of their officials admitted to me, they had no reason to bring this to the attention of their publics or the world. The British *Aushungerungspolitik*—policy of starvation—was the most potent argument the Central governments had to present to their war-tired people. What the German air raids on London accomplished in promoting the British war spirit the blockade of the Central states effected in the German Empire and Austria-Hungary. In a war of such dimensions it was foolish to thus drive the governed into the arms of their governors.

The financial condition of the Central European states to-day is as sound as that of the Entente states. That would not be true if any great share of the Central European war loans had been raised in foreign countries. But, as I have shown, this was not done.

That the war debt is great is a fact. The government's creditors are all in the country, however, and if need be it can set against them the tax-tired multitude. For that there will be no necessity. The depreciation of the currency has automatically reduced by as much as 25 per cent. on an average all state indebtedness, in so far as capital is a lien against the community's natural

THE IRON RATION

resources and labor. But of this more will be said at the proper time.

Early in the summer of 1917 the German and Austro-Hungarian governments were occupied with the question to what extent it would be possible to lighten the burden of the taxpayer. Nothing came of it for the reason that finally it was concluded that the time for financial reorganization was not yet come. Inflated money and high prices would still have to be used to keep the producer at maximum effort and prevent his consuming more than could be permitted.

But the methods of financial reorganization, or we may call it reconstruction, that were discussed are none the less interesting. They involved a reduction of the interest which the government has to pay on war loans, as well as a lightening of the war-loan burden. It was tentatively proposed to either cut into half the rate of interest or to reduce by one-half the principal.

One would think that the Central European bankers would oppose such a step. They did not, however. For the sake of pre-war loans and investments, these men must favor a rehabilitation of the currency, and nothing would do that as effectively as a reduction of the war debt. The mark and crown buy to-day from one-third to one-half what they bought in 1914. With the war debt cut down to one-half they would buy from 60 to 75 per cent. what they bought in that year. As a measure of socio-economic justice, if there be such a thing, the reconstruction proposed would appeal to all who invested money

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

before the outbreak of the war. These people put up money at the rate of 100, while the interest they are getting to-day is worth from 33 to 50. The man who in 1914 invested 100,000 marks would indeed get back 100,000 marks. The trouble is that the mark has depreciated in purchasing power, so that his capital has shrunk to 33,000 or 50,000 marks, as the case may be.

War does not only mortgage the future of a nation, but it also has the knack of tearing down the past.

Tired of hotel life, I had made up my mind in Vienna to find private quarters. In the end I found what I wanted. I ought to have been satisfied with my lodging, seeing that it was the comfortable home of the widow of a former professor of the Vienna university.

I never experienced such mixed feelings in my life as when I discussed terms with the woman. She was a person of breeding and tact and considerable false pride. How much did I want to pay? She did not know what she ought to ask. She had never rented rooms before.

We arrived at an understanding. I moved into the well-furnished flat and the old lady into her kitchen, where she lived and cooked and slept, together with a parrot, until I turned over to her the bedroom and occupied the couch in the parlor.

Before the war the woman had fared better. She was getting a small pension and had a little capital. The income had been large enough to give her a servant. When I moved in, the ser-

THE IRON RATION

vant was gone long ago, and I suspect that since then there had been days when the old lady did not have enough to eat. Still, she was getting the same pension and her little capital was bringing the same interest. The difficulty was that the income bought but a third of what it had formerly secured.

There were thousands of such cases, involving pensioners, widows, and orphans. In their case the world had not only stood still, but it had actually gone backward. The inflated currency left them stranded, and the worst of it was that taxes were growing with every day. The government was levying tribute on the basis of the inflated money. These people had to pay it with coin that was 100 so far as they were concerned.

Real-estate owners were in no better position. The moratorium prevented them from increasing rents, which step had to be taken in the interest of the families of the men at the front. Taxes kept growing, however, and when the income from rent houses was all a person had there was nothing to do but stint. With the currency as low as it was, nobody cared to sell real property of course. It was nothing unusual to see the small rent-house owner act as his own janitor.

While the war loans and government contracts were making some immensely rich, thousands of the middle class were being beggared. But there is nothing extraordinary in this. The socio-economic structure may be likened to a container that holds the national wealth. For purposes of its own the government had watered

WAR LOANS AND ECONOMY

the contents of the bucket and now all had to take from it the thinned gruel. That thousands of aged men and women had to suffer from this could make little impression on governments that were sacrificing daily the lives and health of able-bodied producers on the battle-fields—one of whom was of greater economic value to the state than a dozen of those who were content to spend their life on small incomes without working.

XXI

THE AFTERMATH

IN Cæsar's time the pound of beef at Rome cost $1\frac{1}{4}$ American cents. At the end of the thirteenth century it was $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents, due largely to the influence of the Crusades. In a Vienna library there is an old economic work which contains a decree of the Imperial German government at Vienna fixing the price of a pound of beef, in 1645, at 10 pfennige, or $2\frac{1}{4}$ American cents. When peace followed the Seven Years' War the pound of beef at Berlin was sold at 4 cents American. During the Napoleonic wars it went up to $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents, and when the Franco-Prussian War was terminated beef in Germany was 9 cents the pound. The price of bread, meanwhile, had always been from one-tenth to one-quarter that of beef. In Central Europe to-day the price of beef is from 60 to 75 cents a pound, while bread costs about $5\frac{1}{4}$ cents a pound. The cost of other foods is in proportion to these prices, provided it is bought in the legitimate market. As I have shown, almost any price is paid in the illicit trade. I know of cases when as much as 40 cents was paid for a pound

THE AFTERMATH

of wheat flour, \$2.70 for a pound of butter, \$2.20 for a pound of lard, and 50 cents for a pound of sugar. I have bought sugar for that price myself.

These figures show that there has been a steady upward tendency in food prices ever since the days of imperial Rome, and we have no reason to believe that it was different in the days of Numa Pompilius.

Looking at the thing from that angle, we must arrive at a period when food, in terms of currency, cost nothing at all. Such, indeed, is the fact. When man produced himself whatever he and his needed, money was not a factor in the cost of living. The tiller of the soil, wishing to vary his diet, exchanged some of his grain for the catch of the fisherman, the first industrial, who could not live by fish alone. The exchange was made in kind and neither of the traders found it necessary to make use of a medium of exchange—money. The necessity for such a medium came when exchange in kind was not possible—when food and the like began to have time, place, and tool value, when, in other words, they were no longer traded in by the producer-consumers, but were bought and sold in markets.

But the question that occupies us here principally is, Why has food become dearer?

Actually food is not dearer to-day than it was in Rome under Cæsar. The fact is that money is cheaper, and money is cheaper because it is more plentiful. Let me quote a case that is somewhat abstract, but very applicable here.

THE IRON RATION

Why should the farmer sell food when the money he gets for it will purchase little by virtue of having no longer its former purchasing power? He can be induced to sell such food if he is given enough dollars and cents to buy again for the proceeds of his soil and labor what he obtained through them before. That means that he must be given more money for his wares. But that he is given more money does not leave him better off. What difference does it make to him if for the bushel of wheat he gets one dollar or two dollars when the price of an article he must buy also jumps from one to two dollars? The result is a naught in both cases. To be sure, he could save more, apparently, from two than he could from one dollar. That, however, is fiction, for the reason that the twenty cents he may save of two dollars will in the new economic era buy no more than the ten cents he saved from the one dollar.

It is clear now that the farmer has not profited by the increase in food prices. All others are in the same position. Money has ceased to buy as much as before. The worker who is getting twice the wages he received before the outbreak of a war is obliged to pay twice as much for food. Like the farmer, he is no better off than he was. He, too, sees nothing but zero when expenditures are subtracted from income.

The body politic is a living organism for the reason that it is composed of living organisms—men and women. As a living organism this body has the inherent quality to repair or heal the wounds it has received. The men lost in war are

THE AFTERMATH

replaced by the birth of others. In our time, at least, the women are no longer killed off, and since the remaining males are able to fertilize them a decade or two generally suffices to make good this loss which the body politic has sustained. It is a well-known fact that the average man is able to produce many times the number of children to which monogamy limits him. At the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War, when polygamy had to be legalized in southern Germany, Nuremberg boasted of a citizen who had thirty-seven children by six women.

But even the economic wounds of the body politic heal rapidly. They begin to heal in war almost with the first day on which they are inflicted. Over them spreads the protecting scab of cheap money and high prices.

The German mark buys to-day about one-third of what it bought in July, 1914; this means that it is worth no more in comparison with its former value as a lien against the wealth of the German nation. The several German governments, however, will continue to pay on their public debts the old rate of interest, and when the loans are called in the depreciated mark will take the place of a mark that had full value. The gain for the state is that it has reduced automatically its old public debt by 66 per cent. in interest and capital.

The same applies to the first war loans. The German war loans up to the middle of 1915 were made with a mark that still bought 90 per cent. of what it had bought before. Interest on them

THE IRON RATION

will be paid and the loan redeemed with a mark which to-day has a purchasing power of only 33 pfennige. If nothing is done to interfere with this relation of currency values, the German governments will actually pay interest and return the loan with money cheaper by 62.97 per cent. than what it was when the loans were made. The fifth war loan was made at a time when the purchasing power of the mark was down to about 50 points, so that on this the "economic" saving, as established with the present purchasing power of the mark, would be only 33.34 per cent. On the seventh war loan, made with the mark down to roughly one-third of its former purchasing power, nothing could be saved by the government if redemption of the loan should be undertaken with a mark buying no more than what it buys to-day.

We are dealing here with the mark as a thing that will procure in the market to-day the thing needed to live. In its time the mark that made up the public debt and the war loans served the same purpose, in a better manner, as it were. But that mark is no more. The several governments of Germany will pay interest and redeem loans in the mark of to-day, without paying the slightest heed to the value of the mark turned over to them when the loans were made.

The result of this is that the older investments, be they in government securities or commercial paper, have lost in value. We must take a look at an investor in order to understand that fully. Let us say a man owns in government bonds and

THE AFTERMATH

industrial stocks the sum of 200,000 marks. At 4 per cent. that would give him an annual income of 8,000 marks, a sum which in 1914 would have kept him in Germany very comfortably, if his demands were modest. To-day that income would go about a third as far. His 8,000 marks would buy no more than what four years ago 2,666 marks would have bought. His lien against the wealth of the community, in other words, is 2,666 marks to-day instead of 8,000 marks. Those who had to produce what the man consumed in 1914 have to produce to-day only a third of that. They would have to produce as before if the government returned to the old value of the mark, and since such a production is impossible to-day, with over two million able-bodied men dead and permanently incapacitated, with the same number of women and their offspring to be cared for, and with the losses from deterioration to be made good, the German government cannot take measures that would restore the pre-war value of the mark, especially since it would have to pay interest on war loans with a mark having more purchasing power than had the mark turned over to the government in these loans.

In adopting the policy of cheaper money Central Europe is doing exactly what the Roman government did more than two thousand years ago and what every other government has since then done when wars had made the expenditure of much of the state's wealth necessary. Capital is the loser, of course. That cannot be avoided, however, for the reason that capital is nothing

THE IRON RATION

but the surplus of labor—that part of production which is not consumed. During the European War there was no such actual surplus. The increase in capital, as this increase appeared on the books of the state treasury and the investors, was nothing but an inflation—an inflation which now must be assimilated in figures, since its influence upon actual production is *nil*.

I have already mentioned that the bankers of Central Europe are well disposed toward a partial cancellation of the public debts. They agree not because of patriotic motives, but for the reason that such a cancellation would better the purchasing value of the currency. A partial repudiation of the war loans would immediately force down prices of food and necessities, in which event the mark or crown would again buy more or less than it bought in 1915, let us assume. For the exigencies incident to foreign trade the step has merits of its own. It should not be necessary to point out that a Germany living on an American-dollar basis, as it is now doing with its depreciated mark, would find it hard to undersell the American competitor. German industrial and commercial interests must bear this in mind, and on that account will do their best to preserve the margin which has favored them in the past. Cheap money and high prices do not make for cheap labor, naturally. Even to-day labor in Central Europe has risen in price to within 70 per cent. of its cost in the United States, while food is about 15 per cent. dearer than in the American cities.

THE AFTERMATH

Central Europe, all of Europe, for that matter, will live on what may be called the pre-war American basis when the war is over. The advantages enjoyed by the American dollar in Europe in the past are no more. Gone are the days when an American school-mistress could spend her vacation in Germany or Austria-Hungary and live so cheaply that the cost of the trip would be covered by the difference in the price of board and lodging. The cheap tour of Central Europe is a thing of the past—unless the public debt of the United States should increase so much that some slight advantage accrue therefrom. For what has taken place, or will take place in Europe, will happen in the United States when economic readjustment must be undertaken.

Aside from some damage done to buildings in East Prussia, Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia, and along the Isonzo, the Central states have not suffered directly from the war. The losses sustained in the districts mentioned are relatively small, and much of them has already been repaired. Reconstruction of that sort will not be so great a task, therefore.

Much labor and huge expenditures will be required, however, in the rehabilitation of the railroads and the highroads. It will be necessary to relay at least a quarter of the bed mileage with new ties and rails, and fully one-half of the rolling stock and motive power now in use will have to be discarded before rail transportation in Central

THE IRON RATION

Europe can be brought to its former high standard.

Pressing as this work is, the people of the Central states must first of all increase the production of their soil and bring their animal industry into better condition. For the first of these labors two or three years will suffice; for the second a decade is the least that will be needed. It will be necessary for many years to come to restrict meat consumption. With the exception of South America nobody has meat to sell, and since all will draw on that market high prices are bound to limit the quantities any state in Europe can buy.

On the whole, the damage done by the war to the Central Europeans is not so catastrophic as one would be inclined to believe. In fact, the damage is great only when seen in the light of pre-war standards. In Central Europe, and, for that matter, in all of Europe, nobody expects trains to run a hundred kilometers per hour any more. The masses have forgotten the fleshpots of Egypt, and will be glad to get pork and poultry when no beef is to be had. Enough bread, with a little butter or some cheese on it, will seem a godsend to them for many a year. The wooden shoe has not proved so bad a piece of footgear, and the patched suit is no longer the hallmark of low caste. Enough fuel will go far in making everybody forget that there was a war.

Viewed from that angle, reconstruction in Central Europe is not the impossible undertaking some have painted it. The case reminds some-

THE AFTERMATH

what of the habitual drunkard who has reformed and feels well now despite the fact that he has irretrievably damaged his health.

The assertion has been made that the mechanical improvements and innovations made during the war would in a large measure balance the material damage done. I have tried hard to discover on what such claims are founded. The instance that would support such a contention has yet to be discovered, so far as I know. The little improvements made in gasoline and other internal-combustion engines are hardly worth anything to the social aggregate. I hope that nobody will take as an improvement the great strides made in the making of guns and ammunition. The stuff that has been written on the development of the aeroplane in war as a means of communication in peace is interesting, but not convincing.

From that angle the world has not been benefited by the great conflagration that has swept it.

But great hopes may be placed in the mental reconstruction that has been going on since the war entered upon its downward curve. Men and women in the countries at war have become more tolerant—newspaper editors and writers excepted, perhaps. As the war developed into a struggle between populations rather than between armies, the psychology of the firing-line spread to those in the rear. I have met few soldiers and no officers who spoke slightlyingly of their enemies. They did not love their enemies, as some idealists demand, but they respected them. There is

THE IRON RATION

no hatred in the trenches. Passions will rise, of course, as they must rise if killing on the battle-field is not to be plain murder. But I have seen strong men sob because half an hour ago they had driven the bayonet into the body of some antagonist. I have also noticed often that there was no exultation in the troops that had defeated an enemy. It seemed to be all in the day's march.

In the course of time that feeling reached the men and women home. The men from the front were to educate the population in that direction. It may have taken three years of reiteration to accomplish the banishment of the war spirit. When I left Central Europe it had totally vanished. The thing had settled down to mere business.

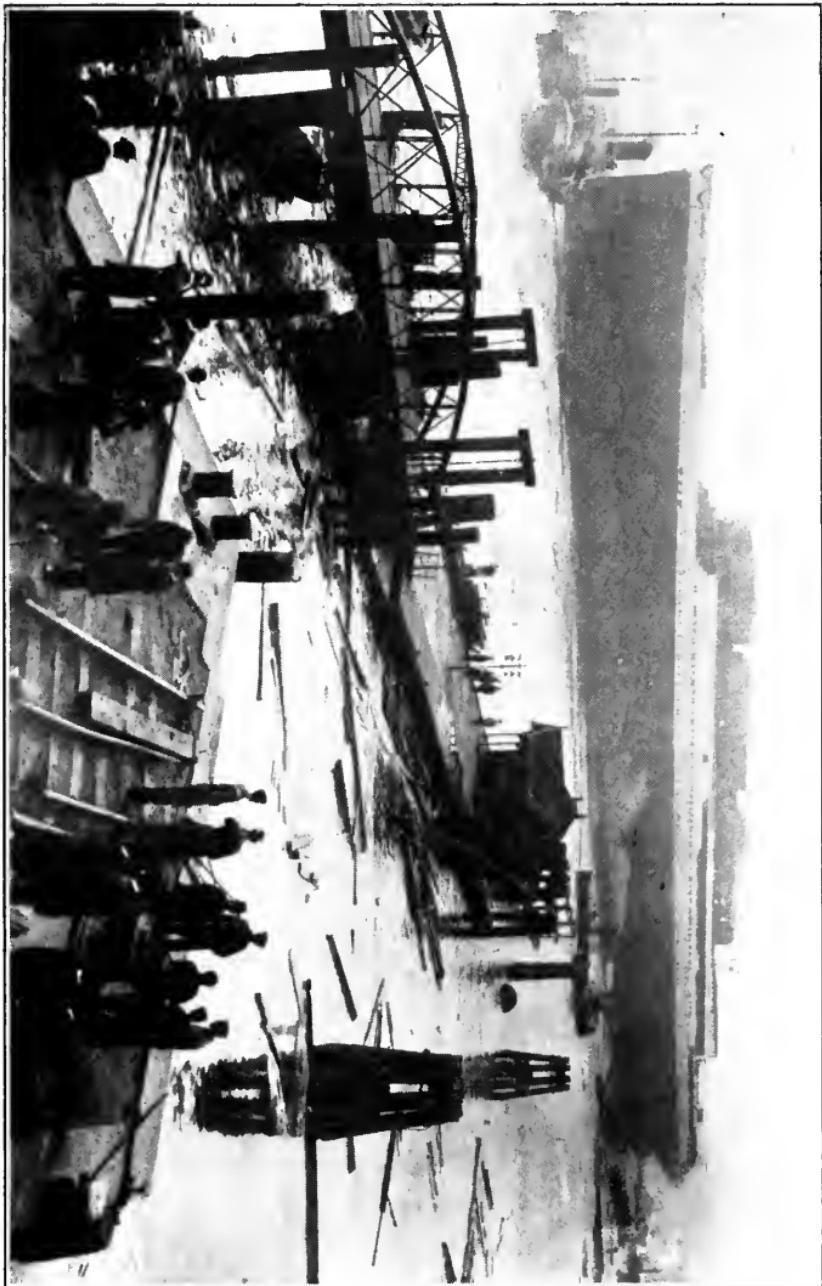
There is also a socio-political aftermath.

That socialism will rule Central Europe after the war is believed by many. I am not of that opinion. But there is no doubt that the several governments will steal much of the thunder of the Social-Democrats. Some of it they have purloined already. The later phases of food control showed usually a fine regard for the masses. That they did this was never more than the result of making virtue of necessity. Endless hair-splitting in political theories and tendency would result, however, if we were to examine the interest in the masses shown by the several governments. What the socialist wishes to do for the masses for their own good the government did for the good of the state.

Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

SCENE IN GERMAN SHIP-BUILDING YARD

The great ship in the background has just been launched. Though the war left Germany no man to spare, every effort has been made to materially increase the country's merchant marine. To-day Germany's mercantile fleet is stronger than ever.





THE AFTERMATH

Since the masses are the state, and since I am not interested in political propaganda of any sort, mere quibbling would result from the attempt to draw distinctions. Politics have never been more than the struggle between the masses that wanted to control the government and the government that wanted to control the masses.

For the first time in the history of Central Europe, the several governments had to publicly admit that the masses were indispensable in their scheme instead of merely necessary. That they were necessary had been realized in the manner in which the farmer looks upon the draft animal. The several governments had also done the best they could to have this policy be as humane as possible. There were sick benefits and pensions. Such things made the populace content with its lot. So long as old age had at least the promise that a pension would keep the wolf from the door, small wages, military service, heavy taxes, and class distinctions were bound to be overlooked by all except the wide-awake and enterprising. The few that were able to examine the scheme from without, as it were, might voice their doubts that this was the best manner in which the ship of state could be steered, but their words generally fell on the ears of a populace to which government was indeed a divine-right institution.

I have met Germans and Austro-Hungarians who were able to grasp the idea that the government ought to be their servant instead of their master. Their number was small, however.

THE IRON RATION

Generally, such men were socialists rather than rationalists.

It is nothing unusual to meet persons, afflicted with a disease, who claim that nothing is wrong with them. The "giftie" for which Burns prayed is not given to us. It was so with the Germans and the thing called militarism. I have elsewhere referred to the fact that militarism as an internal condition in the German Empire meant largely that thinking was an offense. But the Prussian had accepted that as something quite natural. We need not be surprised at that. Prussia is essentially a military state. The army made Prussia what it is. Not alone did it make the state a political force, but it also was the school in which men were trained into good subjects. In this school the inherent love of the German for law and order was supplemented by a discipline whose principal ingredient was that the state came first and last and that the individual existed for the state.

The non-Prussians of the German Empire, then, knew that militarism, in its internal aspect, was a state of things that made independent thought impossible. To that extent they hated the system, without overlooking its good points, however. The fact is that much of what is really efficient in Germany had its birth in the Prussian army. Without this incubator of organization and serious effort, Germany would have never risen to the position that is hers.

As a civilian I cannot but resent the presump-

THE AFTERMATH

tion of another to deny me the right to think. Yet there was a time when I was a member of an organization that could not exist if everybody were permitted to think and act accordingly. I refer to the army of the late South African Republic. Though the Boer was as free a citizen as ever lived and was of nothing so intolerant as of restraint of any sort, it became necessary to put a curb upon his mind in the military service. That this had to be done, if discipline was to prevail, will be conceded by all. The same thing is practised by the business man, whose employees cannot be allowed to think for themselves in matters connected with the affairs of the firm. On that point we need not cavil.

The mistake of the men in Berlin was that they carried this prohibition of thinking too far. It went far beyond the bounds of the barrack-yard—permeated, in fact, the entire socio-political fabric. That was the unlovely part of militarism in Prussia and Germany. The policy of the several governments, to give state employment only to men who had served in the army, carried the command of the drill sergeant into the smallest hamlet, where, unchecked by intelligent control, it grew into an eternal nightmare that strangled many of the better qualities of the race or at best gave these qualities no field in which they might exert themselves. The liberty-loving race which in the days of Napoleon had produced such men as Scharnhorst and Lüchow, Körner and others, and the legions they commanded, was on the verge of becoming a non-thinking machine,

THE IRON RATION

which men exercising power for the lust of power could employ, when industrial and commercial despots were not exploiting its constituents.

The war showed some of the thinkers in the government that this could not go on. Bethmann-Hollweg, for instance, saw that the time was come when Prussia would have to adopt more liberal institutions. The Prussian election system would have to be made more equitable. Agitation for that had been the burning issue for many a year before the war, and I am inclined to believe that something would have been done by the government had it not feared the Social-Democrats. The fact is that the Prussian government had lost confidence in the people. And it had good reason for that. The men in responsible places knew only too well that the remarkable growth of socialism in the country was due to dissatisfaction with the rule of Prussian Junkerism. They did not have the political insight and sagacity to conclude that a people, which in the past had not even aspired to republicanism, would abandon the Social-Democratic ideals on the day that saw the birth of a responsible monarchical form of government. What they could see, though, was that the men coming home after the war would not permit a continuation of a government that looked upon itself as the holy of holies for which the race was to spill its blood whenever the high priest of the cult thought that necessary.

"We are fighting for our country!" is the reply that has been given me by thousands of German

THE AFTERMATH

soldiers. Not a one has ever told me that he was fighting for the Emperor, despite the fact that against their King and Emperor these men held no grudge. And here I should draw attention to the fact that the German Emperor means comparatively little to the South Germans, the Bavarian, for instance. He has his own monarch. While the Emperor is *de jure* and *de facto* the War Lord, he is never more than a sort of commander-in-chief to the non-Prussian part of the German army.

Liberal government is bound to come for Germany from the war. There can be no question of a change in the form of government, however. Those who believe that the Germans would undertake a revolution in favor of the republican form of government know as little of Germany as they know of the population said to be on Mars. The German has a monarchical mind. His family is run on that principle. The husband and father is the lord of the household—*Der Herr im Hause*. Just as the lord of the family household will have less to say in the future, so will the lord of the state household have less to say in the years to come. There will be more co-operation between man and woman in the German household in the future and the same will take place in the state family. The government will have to learn that he is best qualified to rule who must apply the least effort in ruling—that he can best command who knows best how to obey.

This is the handwriting on the wall in Germany to-day. A large class is still blind to the

THE IRON RATION

"*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin,*" but that class must either mend its way or go down in defeat. The German at the front has ceased to think himself the tool of the government. He is willing to be an instrument of authority so long as that authority represents not a wholly selfish and self-sufficient caste.

The indications for their development lie in the fact that the German generally does not hold the Prussian element in the empire responsible for the war. The Bavarian does not hate the Prussian. The West German does not entertain dislike for the men east of the Elbe river. What Bismarck started in 1870 is being completed by the European War. All sectionalism has disappeared. Three years' contact with the German army, and study of the things that are German, has convinced me that to-day there is no Prussian, Bavarian, Saxon, Würtemberger, Badenser, Hanoverian, or Hessian. I have never met any but Germans, in contrast to conditions in the Austro-Hungarian army, where in a single army corps I could draw easily distinction between at least four of the races in the Dual Monarchy.

It must be borne in mind that these people speak one language and have been driven into closer union by the defense of a common cause. What is true of racial affinity in the Anglo-Saxon race is true in the case of the German race; all the more true since the latter lives within the same federation.

I must make reference here to the fact that

THE AFTERMATH

even the German socialists are no great admirers of the republican form of government. Of the many of their leaders whom I have met, not a single one was in favor of the republic. Usually they maintained that France had not fared well under the republican form of government. When the great success of republicanism in Switzerland was brought to their attention, they would point out that what was possible in a small country was not necessarily possible in a large one. Upon the American republic and its government most of these men looked with disdain, asserting that nowhere was the individual so exploited as in the United States. It was that very exploitation that they were opposed to, said these men. Government was necessary, so long as an anarchic society was impossible and internationalism was as far off as ever, as the war itself had shown. Germany, they asserted, was in need of a truly representative government that would as quickly as possible discard militarism and labor earnestly for universal disarmament. A monarch could labor better in that vineyard than the head of a republic, so long as his ministers were responsible to the people.

Upon that view we may look as the extreme measure of reform advocated by any political party in Germany to-day. It is that of the Scheidemann faction of Social-Democrats, a party which latterly has been dubbed "monarchical socialists." The extreme doctrinarians in the socialist camp, Haase and Liebknecht, go further than that, to be sure, but their demands will not

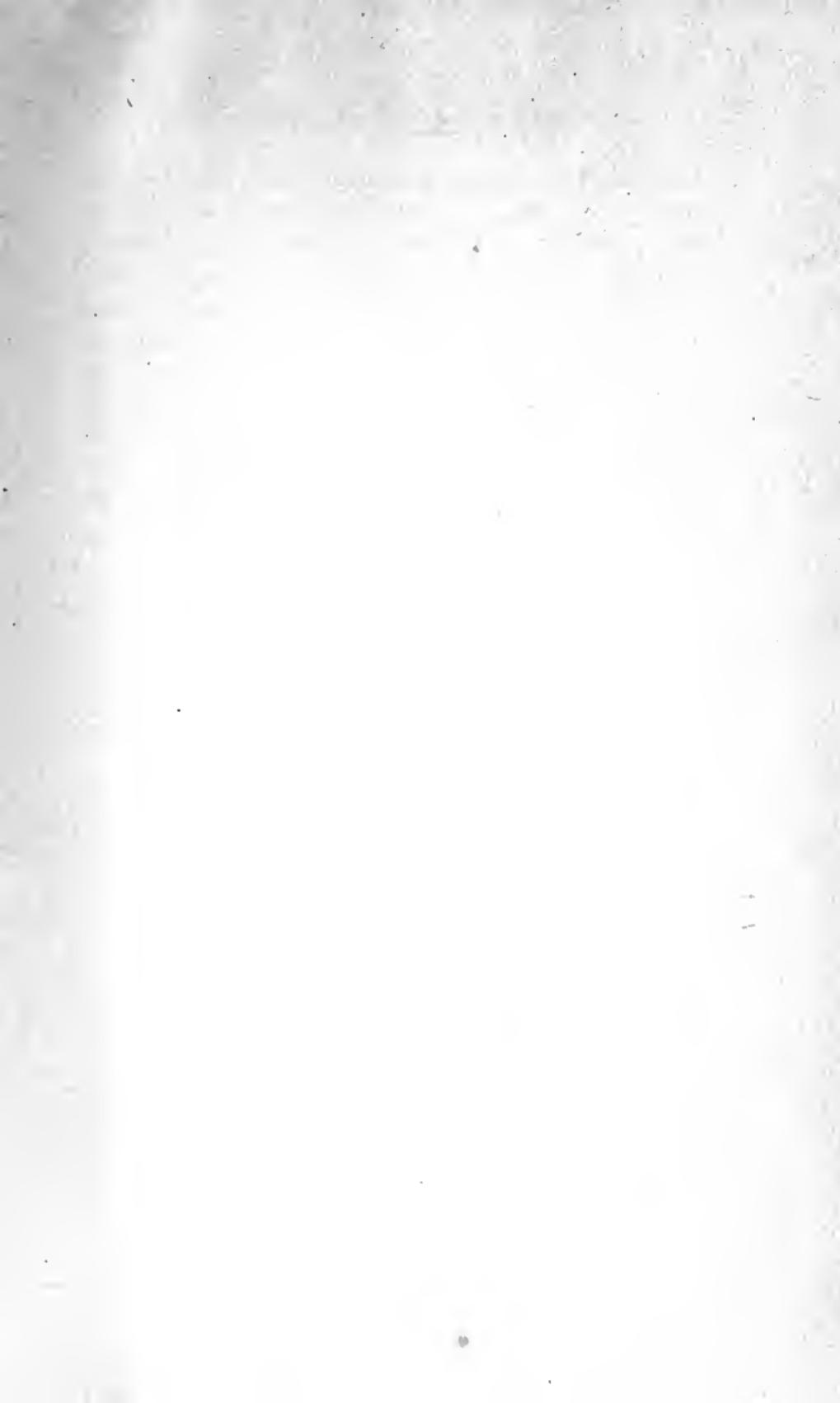
THE IRON RATION

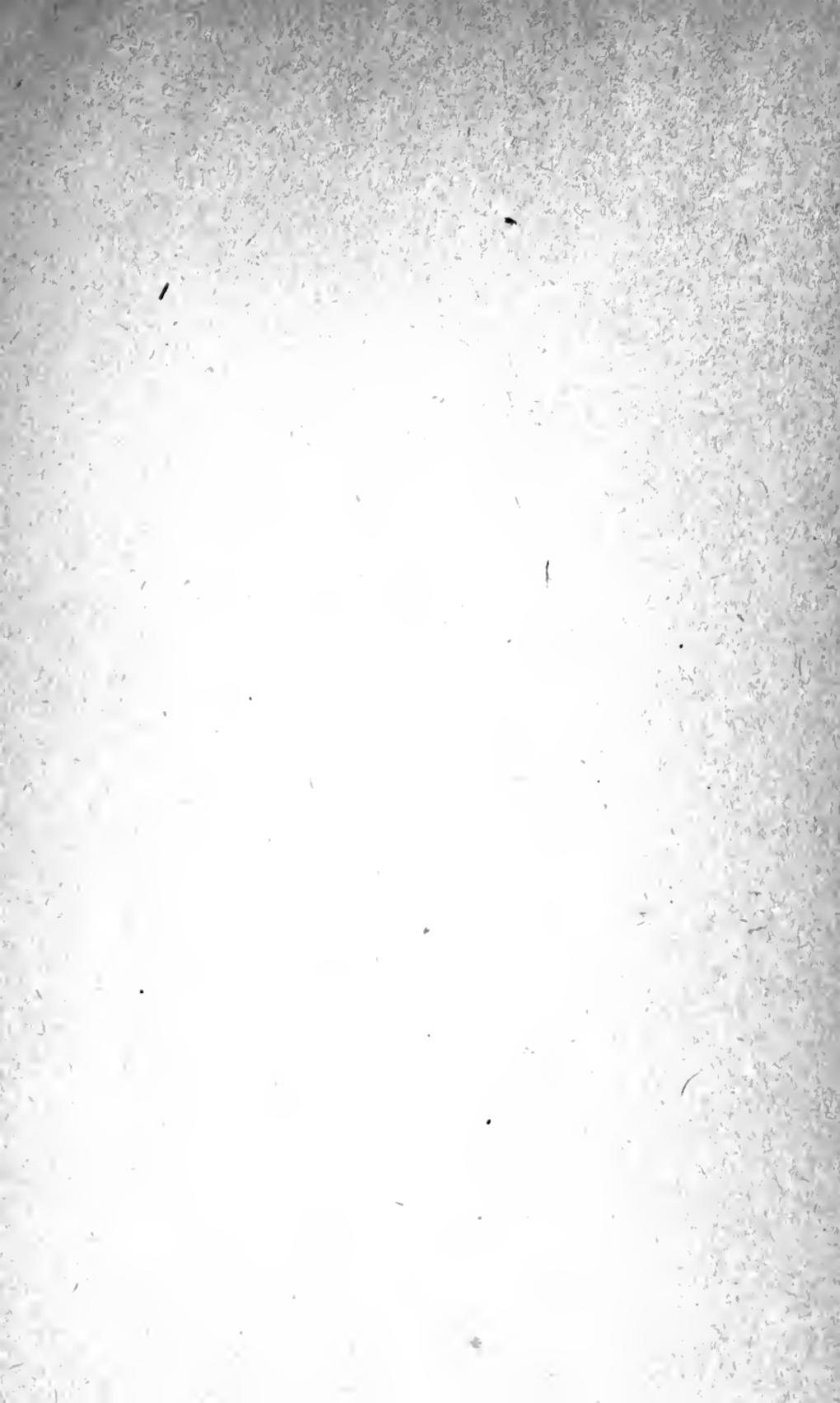
be heeded, even after the pending election reforms have been made. The accession to articulate party politics in Germany, which these reforms will bring, will go principally to the Liberal group, among whom the conservative socialists must be numbered to-day. Not socialism, but rationalism will rule in Germany when the war is over.

One of the results of this will be that the Prussian Junker will have passed into oblivion a few years hence. Even now his funeral oration is being said, and truly, to be fair to the Junker:

The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft' interred with their bones.

THE END







UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 549 983 5

